

No-71 · SCIENCE FICTION · HORROR · FANTASY · ANIMATION · SPFX · 95p

STARBURST

**INDIANA
JONES
AND
THE
TEMPLE
OF DOOM**

COLOUR FEATURES ON

SPLASH

THE NEW
HIT FANTASY MOVIE

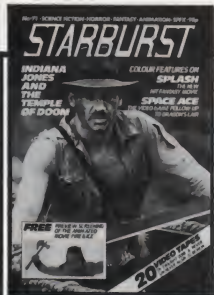
SPACE ACE

THE VIDEO GAME FOLLOW-UP
TO DRAGON'S LAIR

FREE PREVIEW SCREENING
OF THE ANIMATED
MOVIE FIRE & ICE



20 VIDEO TAPES
OF TWILIGHT ZONE & NEVER
SAY NEVER AGAIN TO BE WON



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Opinion

Sitting comfortably? Good, then I'll begin... if I can stop guffawing. Those backward elves who mean so well and have ruined so much at Disney over the last couple of years feel they've solved their major riddle. How to make and sell films more suitable to the 80s (even the 70s, would do) than their usual puritanical, 40s' style, all s-well-in-the-American-garden, who's-ever-heard-of-Lebanon, anyway-our-car-flies and Mummy's-still-a-virgin numbers. The answer, they think, is splitting Disney more or less in twain and coming up with a new subsidiary company to handle the allegedly rough stuff.

Enter: Touchstone Films. Touch wood would be closer!

The idea is that Disney will continue the business of "timeless classics". Touchstone will "create timely entertainment." Sounds fine, but it never matters a Disney-deleted damn what a company's called. A Disney film is a Disney film, right? No disguising it. They have a certain taste, feel, smell. Home cookin', sweet violets... and mothballs. They're like movies out of Hollywood's wax museum. Historical artefacts sold on a nostalgia ticket. We all start our cinema going with them, grow up and move on. They stand still. Not just movies for mums and kids. They are cinematic mummies. Films made for tomorrow with both feet (arms, legs, heart and soul) in yesteryear's quicksands.

And Touchstone or not, they'll still be Disney films. Everyone will know because the media will remind us they're Disney films - the very label which has been the kiss of box-office death since *Mary Poppins*, or until *Never Cry Wolf* came out this year. I mean even the new company's hype refers to itself as "... Disney's Touchstone". So what's the point?



The Disney elves say if they'd worked out this idea before, *Tron* and *Tex* would have been Touchstone releases. Big deal. They'd still have gone down the Swanee. Would *Something Wicked This Way Comes* be any better - or worse - if it was labelled Touchstone? Of course not! It's the film, the planning behind it that counts, not the wrapping or release format (though that can, admittedly, help, but even carefully engineered releases never save a bad movie). Take *Rear Window*. Made for Paramount in 1954 and now re-released triumphantly by Universal. Who cares about the logo at the start of it? The film is the marvel we're all queuing and paying for, not some label.

At least, the new company (which has a nondescript logo) explains why Disney backed Ron Howard's successful mermaid movie, *Splash*, with blade running Daryl Hannah hiding her legs (and alas, everything else)... and Jessica Lange's *Country* film. They're the first Touchstones. *The Black Cauldron* and, obviously, *Return to Oz* remain on the Disney label. Maybe... After all, the elves - yesterday's men! damn nearly removed the Disney name from *Never Cry Wolf* which they now shamefacedly admit "has brought dignity back to Disney".

But what, I wonder, happens if the teeny-weensy more adult Touchstones earn more money than the fey Disney releases. If, in fact, Touchstone becomes Disney's tombstone will Disney settle for being just a cable-tv channel and leisure park champion?

Tony Crawley

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CHRISTOPHER WHO?

What have you got against Christopher Lee at *Starburst*? All we get is an occasional reference. Please, let's have a picture or two or three or more.

Maybe you could even manage an interview; if nobody can spare the time to interview him, just give me the chance.

Pauline Fry,
Stroud,
Gloucestershire.

Pictures we can give you immediately, Pauline. Interviews take a little longer to arrange. We're planning a special issue of Hammer films in the not-too-distant future. Perhaps an interview could be squeezed into that. We'll work on it...

THE UNKINDEST CUTS

I thought I should warn you that the idea of censoring video films more than the cinema releases has already started.

I enjoyed *Halloween 3* last year at the cinema, so I readily took up the chance to see it again on video. Imagine how horrified I was to see this notice on the label: "This film was certified 15 for theatrical release by the BBFC. Further cuts for video release have been made and approved by the BBFC."

I was more horrified when I watched the film. I counted three scenes that have been cut, so that they now contain no violence at all – the murder of the tramp just stops before he is killed, making it confusing.

If there's any more cuts, then they are not so obvious. The BBFC might approve of these cuts, but I'm sure the makers of the film don't. Especially make-up man Tom Burman, whose work suffers the most.

The film now contains nothing you wouldn't expect to see in a PG – and this film was only a 15 certificate.

So look carefully at the label of a video movie before you rent or buy, especially one from Thorn/EMI (the distributors of *Halloween 3* on video). Who knows what they're capable of doing to an 18 certificate film?

Feel free to censor this letter if you print it.

By the way, thanks for a great magazine.

D. Hanser,
Basildon,
Essex.

Alan McKenzie replies: "Thanks for taking the time to tell us this, David. We also heard from T. Young of Middlesborough, P. Whittleton of Hull, Stephen F. Witkowski of Rochdale, Alan Kennedy of Camberly, A. G. Davies of Cardiff, Robin Pierce of Pwllheli on the same subject. Thanks, folks.

"I did a little investigating and found that because of the unresolved situation with regard to the Video Bill pas-

Starburst LETTERS

Send all your comments and criticisms to:
**Starburst Letters, Starburst Magazine,
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London W2 4SA, United Kingdom.**



Top: Christopher Lee giving perhaps his finest performance as Lord Summerisle in the brilliant thriller, *The Wicker Man* (1973). Middle: Lee in his famous role of Dracula in Hammer's 1958 version. Above: A stake through the heart for Lee's evil vampire Count in *Dracula Hes Risen from the Grave* (1968).

sing through the Parliamentary process at the moment (press time), video distributors are at a loss as to which set of standards to apply. Already, BBFC approved films on video have been taken away for closer examination by certain enthusiastic members of the British constabulary. Thorn/EMI have to take the random nature of police seizure of video films and use this as a yardstick in releasing their movies (particularly horror movies).

"Hopefully, as soon as the Bright Bill becomes established, the uncertainty in the video field should disappear. Until then, we are all stuck with the prospect of horror on video being edited so as to be safe from even the most zealous pro-censorship official.

"Personally, I wouldn't blame Thorn/EMI. They are as much victims of the situation as we are."

A SIMPLE DESULTORY PHILIPIC

There I was, one dark night in early April, twiddling the dial on my short wave radio set listening for any snippets of information when to my horror a crackling voice came over the airwaves and confirmed my worst fears. For the fifty-seventh year in succession an outbreak of Hollywood Oscaritis had been confirmed in California. Though mainly a disease of the affluent (no not affluent), the masses were being driven wild with characteristic hysteria. Those afflicted walk around in a semi-conscious state with a little yellow man clinging wildly to the hands. No sense to be got out of them, so what about those unlucky enough to escape infection. The losers keep a stiff upper lip, if they're British, and hope to catch it next year.

Yes, folks, it's that time again. The hills are alive with the sound of vested interests and stupid crinkly envelopes which a subnormal ape could open but which seems beyond most guest comperes. From every casting couch and hole they come in their droves to see who is to be king of the heap. For some there will be unparalleled joy but for most nothing but bitter disappointment but still they come. I have visions of one deserving loser running up to the podium and running off clutching an Oscar which is rightfully theirs but has been awarded to the flavour of the month. Up the Empire State building the person goes only to be shot down by bad reviews. The last poignant words are, "I love you Oscar though you treat me so."

Sad, isn't it? Not the story but the fact each year the people with brains look forward to the world's premiere awards ceremony with eager anticipation only to be shot down by the same old song. How is it the same films get to win every year? I'll tell you why. The Academy votes for films which reflects well on American life, the Academy

and the industry. The Academy gets my *Bimbo Oscar* for consistent efforts to turn the clock back, encouragement of pap and stupidity. A film called *Robot Spenda's Pig* could beat the best films ever made so long as it was ponderous, boring and pretentious. It could be five minutes long, be in Greek, have no people in it – aw, what's the point. I'll keep on getting angry and the Academy will keep on being stupid.

The sick, sentimental, self-righteous streak which had aided British films over the past few years finally worked against us, ironically when we had some films worth all the praise and ballyhoo.

I'm an Academy member and I'm very stupid but I feel noble voting for films that are atypical of cinema today. Alfred Hitchcock never won an Academy Award for direction. Henry Fonda had to wait for the embarrassing sentimental *Death Bed* Award for his first, whilst Paul Newman and Richard Burton have been nominated seven times a piece but have never won. The Academy pays lip service to cinematic excellence.

George Lucas and Steven Spielberg single-handedly saved Hollywood by netting over a billion dollars and making people go back to the cinema. Out of the hatful of Oscars which have grudgingly been given, they have been nominated for the big ones only a few times but never had a hope of winning. The "respectable critics" expect art when they go to see a film because they are boring people whose film knowledge probably extends to changing the roll in a pocket camera. If you want art go and buy a picture.

Contrary to popular opinion entertainment and box office success can go hand in hand. Lucas and Spielberg proved that. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* was a better film than *Chariots of Fire*. *E.T.* was a better film than *Ghandi*. The reason the latter films won was because people voted for a message. Just because a movie doesn't express views on life, politics, toilets and the art of Zen and tries to appeal to the baser sense, it doesn't have to be looked upon as inferior. One day the new genre which Lucas and Spielberg have

heralded may be accepted. I certainly hope so because when it is, the floodgates will be opened for a new exciting era the limit of which will be one's imagination.

However, let us consider the last few Academy favourites. *Annie Hall*, *The Deer Hunter*, *Kramer vs Kramer*, *Ordinary People*, *Chariots of Fire*, *Ghandi* and now *Terms of Endearment*. They all, with the stunning exception of the very good *Deer Hunter*, deal with life, people, families and relationships in a way that is cheap, unrealistic, sickly, sentimentally in the worst possible way and insulting.

Terms of Endearment got my vote for best disposable hankey advert or best soap opera with a budget running into millions, but Best Film? Good grief! The Best Film of the year was *Local Hero*, anglo-bias aside, but it wasn't even nominated. I had a preference for *Jedi* but knew it never had a

hope. Mawkish feelings again prevailed when Shirley Maclaine picked up Best Actress. Was Meryl Streep worth a third Award in almost as many years? I'll accept answers on a postcard. America is a land of hero worship. Pity the land which has no heroes. Pity the land which has need of heroes. Discuss in less than 5000 words.

Listen now, because you will hear this first here. Next year's nominees for Best Film will include *Indiana Jones* (and the Temple of whatever they finally decide upon), whilst best director nominee will be Steven Spielberg for the said film. Neither will win because someone has decided the time is not right.

Some people are going to call me stupid. And some will call me worse things but if they still haven't thought about the things I've said then the joke is on them. This has not been an attack on any film because it doesn't interest

me but on the films that win each year when they don't deserve to. The system is at fault so we all suffer. Therein lies the problem and therein lies the bane of cinema today. Movie people live not as they like but as they can. May the Force be with the original minds because they are going to need it.

Robert Moss,
Basildon,
Essex.

FILM TO VIDEO

Most film-buffs usually throw their hands up in collective horror when faced with an epic film on video and usually say that films were meant to be seen on the big screen, etc. However, I'm beginning to find that the video test is a useful guide to just how good science-fiction films are these days.

For an example, take *Brainstorm*. In the cinema, I was overawed by its spectacular effects and, yes, I was even moved by its religious ending. However, on video, the effects are forced to take second place to the story and characters and thus the poor script and cardboard characters are shown in full. As they were swamped by the visual feast of effects in the cinema, I hadn't noticed first time around but on reflection, by seeing it on video, my high opinion of the film has dropped considerably. The same goes for *1941*, which I thought was very funny (as well as spectacular) in the cinema but on second viewing, it becomes a very bad film indeed.

It would be interesting to hear other readers' opinions on just how well films transfer to video. Still, some films do manage to look bad on both big and little screens and one example is *Star Trek II*, which I thought was bad and so do my friends. It's a pity they only edited 15 seconds from the cinema release; two hours would have been just right. Sorry for this highly opinionated last word but it's about times someone showed up *Star Trek II* for the fraud it is. John Brosnan, we're right behind you... hiding.

Philip Guest,
Bournemouth,
Dorset.



Merritt Butrick as the scientist son of Captain Kirk and Kirstie Alley (left to be seen in *Blind Date*) as *Starfleet* trainee Lt. Saevik in *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*.

Revenge of FLICKERS by Tim Quinn & Dicky Howett



The Merman Cometh

Splash is right...! A few days after his 30th birthday, Ron Howard was Hollywood's man of the hour. He's the director of the first Disney film to strike gold since *Mary Poppins* took to her wings above London in 1964. And, as a result of Disney's new heroine with fins, Ron inherited the big Zanuck-Brown sf film of the year, *Cocoon*.

The old firm of producers Richard Zanuck and David Brown started Steven Spielberg off in feature films with *The Sugarland Express* ten years ago. Next came *Jaws*... Originally, they were going ahead on *Cocoon* with one of Spielberg's discoveries, Robert Zemeckis, director of Spielberg's first productions, *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* and *Used Cars*. But Bob had to back off his first sf venture due to post-production work on his Michael Douglas-starring Indy Jones style adventure, *Romancing The Stone*.

This news left Zanuck-Brown up the well known Swanee. Everything was set for a June 1 start for shooting in Florida... and suddenly no one was at the helm. Then Disney, or rather, Disney's new "adult film" company, Touchstone, premiered the merry mermaid movie, *Splash*, with enormous success, high praise from Ron's directing, ex-blade-running Daryl Hannah's swimming and bags of tired jokes about this mermaid having legs. She does, though. The film kicked off with the best audiences for a Disney live-action number since *The Black Hole*, which would not be saying much except that unlike the 1979 film's rapid disappearance into box-office black holes, *Splash* continued causing queues galore. It's such a big hit, in fact, you'll find that Disney will release it in Europe, not Touchstone...!

But back to *Cocoon*... Zanuck-Brown has kept the story close to their executive chest for some years now. It sounds to me like an *Alien* rip — from the title alone. But all I really know about the film is that it's scripted by Tom Vendek from an unpublished work by David Saperstein. I'm highly intrigued... Zanuck-Brown do not usually waste our time with garbage.

What a do, Ron, Ron!

Cocoon should, then, be exactly the tougher kind of movie that young Ron Howard needs under his belt. Even with the moustache he grew while directing his telly-mate, Henry Winkler, in *Night Shift* (1982), Ron still looks a babe in arms. He always has done. When he directed his first feature he was 23, and looked about six months; he was then the youngest director in Film City since Orson Welles at 26. Since then, Ron's handled tele-films with not only his friendly co-stars from *Happy Days*, but heavyweight talent like Bette Davis.

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME



Top: A portrait of the eternally youthful-looking Ron Howard, director of Disney's summer blockbuster, *Splash*. Above: Howard directs Daryl Hannah on location for *Splash*.

And yet, when most Hollywood top brass think of Ron Howard, they remember only Richie Cunningham in *Happy Days*. In fact, when they see him, they still see the screen's eternal kid. He's been everyone's son in his time — Glenn Ford's, Andy Griffith's, Henry Fonda's, Lauren Bacall's. Let alone being Richie, the son of Tom Bosley-Mario Ross's Mr and Mrs. C. for six years.

The Hollywood executives seem to forget the series has carried on without him for four years now (it must, like *MASH*, finally wrap up this year). And until reading the *Splash* take, they probably didn't even realise (or care) that Ron prefers directing to acting. "It's harder work, sure," he says. "I've enjoyed acting but it's not nearly as exciting as directing."

Then again, Ron's been acting for 26 years. He started in films aged four in *The Journey* (1959), with Yul Brynner and Deborah Kerr. He was a tv-veteran of eight when *Time* magazine asked him his ambitions: "I want to become a producer-director-writer-cameraman-actor." He simply dropped acting, is all. He's done the rest with his Major H company, writing scripts with his father and brother (actors both), producing with some of his tv cohorts and directing tele-films during his vacations from *Happy Days*. He studied (at nights) at the U.S.C. film school, and shot one of his tv numbers, *Leo and Loree*, at weekends.

Almost inevitably, it was Roger Corman who gave Ron his directing break in 1977. Ron had acted for Roger in *Eat My Dust* (1976). So he knew what was expected. Corman underlined it, anyway. "I want an action comedy centering around a car chase. It must involve young people on the run. It must star Ron Howard. And it must fit the title, *Grand Theft Auto*, which has been pre-tested for audience acceptance. You've four weeks to shoot it... so what you waiting for!"

Ron didn't hang around. He finished the flick in 23 days, setting a new Corman record for the number of camera set-ups in a day along the way. "The previous record was 82 on *Hollywood Boulevard*," he recalls. "I managed 91 by using two units simultaneously." Corman cut the result only marginally, added one car chase ("he usually adds two so I must've done okay") and released the film with the typical hype line: See the greatest cars in the world destroyed!

Incidentally, among the Major H productions which Ron Howard directed for tv was *Cotton Candy*, which just happens to feature Disney's other box-office hero of the moment, *Never Cry Wolf*'s Charles Martin Smith. Both young men won their biggest screen break, of course, in a certain 1973 movie called *American Graffiti*, directed by George... er... George... damn, had the name on the tip of my computer a second ago...

Shh!... Guys at work!

Two more good pals of George Lucas are Hal Barwood and Matthew Robbins. They seem to be on to a good thing at the moment but are saying absolutely nothing about it. Having learned from too much hype on *Dra-gonslayer*, they've not even issued a title for the \$7m secret sf movie they started making on June 1 on — again — top secret locations. Hal is directing from their script.

One silly rumour is that it's the first of the next series of *Star Wars* sagas. What rubbish — with a peanuts budget of \$7m...

Tele-Marathon

Aunty BBC is kicking in with some of the hefty £7 million budget (that's \$10m in reel money, folks) for the upcoming marathon series based on John Christopher's sf trilogy, *The Tripods*. Running time? Oh, just a mere 18 hours... (Like to see 'em get that on a cassette).

Oz-Mosis

Forgot it in the rush of last month's news — and now that you've seen the pix of the new kid in the papers, you know it anyway — but Gary Kurtz has begun his massive Disney production of *Oz*, which used to be (and more honestly) known as *Return To Oz*. The film is rolling at Elstree — where else for a former Lucasfilm honcho?

Nine-year-old Canadian Fairuza Balk, a name to balk at indeed, has taken over Judy Garland's pigtails as Dorothy. Her aunt and uncle on the Kansas farm are Piper Laurie and Matt Clark. Also into dual roles, on in Kansas and in Oz, are Nicol Williamson (Boorman's Merlin, tv's Mountbatten and vowel stretcher extraordinary), and Jean Marsh.

Making fullest use of his Elstree experiences on *Star Wars* and *Dark Crystal*/duties, Gary Kurtz has assembled an elite force of technicians made for fantasy. Norman Reynolds has designed the show — as he did, for both *Star Wars* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, winning Oscars both times. Zoran Perisic, who must be fed up by now of being called "the man who made *Superman* fly", is the visual effects consultant — what price, rainbows? Two *Crystal*-isers, Lyle Consay and Ian Wingrove, tend the design and mechanics of all manner of new Ozian folk from a talking hen, a guy with a pumpkin head, something called The Gump and, inevitably, a robot named Tok Tok. Doesn't sound too tall an order for Lyle who helped design the Skeksis, the Urkskeks and best of all, old Aughra.

Watch out for Alan Jones' major coverage of the making of the film in a future issue of *Starburst* and discover the names of some of the heavyweight



An electrifying scene from *The Entity*, directed by Sidney J. Furie who is set to make *The Marvel of Haunted Castle*

Lights...

Whoops! The William Friedkin love-affair with De Palma's usual producer, George Lito, didn't last long. Lito has pulled out of Friedkin's *See Trial*, by George. Shooting starts in Scotland on June 1... Sam Raimi's *XYZ Murders* is now *Crimewave* and remains a thriller spoof. It has to with *Three Stooges'* regular, Emil Fitka among the cast... No problems in West Germany for video sales of *Tanz der Teufel*. Sam will be pleased. *It's Evil Dead*, you see... *Space 1999* Martin Landau has completed *Trial By Terror* with Kay Lenz and

Colleen Camp. They could terrorise me any old time... One Japan company so keen to get *Supergirl*, it's paid nearly \$3 million for the TV rights. The Salkinds have also sold US video rights of *Santa Claus* for \$2.6m before the film has been cast, let alone shot... Sidney J. Furie follows *The Entity* with *The Marble of Haunted Castle*, the only one of eight new Fox films for '84 to be shot in Hollywood... *Risky Business* finds Tom Cruise has the lead in Ridley Scott's \$30m *Legend*. Sam Jones, *Flash Gordon* that was, is making a tele-Western, *No Man's Land*, with Stella Stevens...



Sam Jones (ex-Flash Gordon) is soon to be seen in a Western called *No Man's Land*.

movie talents who waded in to help director Murch finish the movie on schedule.

Santa Clause

I'm wondering what kind of danger money is being negotiated for the special effects men working on the Salkinds' *Santa Claus* film. Instead of just Chris Reeve and a few others flying around, this time the Salkinds need to get the white-haired old duffer, his sleigh and eight reindeer into the air. Faked? Of course, it'll be faked. They still need to raise 'em up a bit — 180ft off the ground says *Supergirl* Helen Slater. Oh yes, very nasty, a definite danger item among all the *Santa* clauses.

Shooting began on the film (very quietly) in December; second unit and background snowy stuff in Norway. The main action doesn't begin at Pine-wood until August, by which time, one presumes, the Salkinds will have located a director and indeed some other actors to back up poor Dudley Moore. He's been mighty lonely in the cast list for four months or more. Dad's due to be one of *Santa*'s little helpers, not one of the reindeer, dear!

In all, the fantasy film will cost the usual Salkind tickle of \$50 million. Ilya Salkind is not worried (Of course not. It's not his money. Never is). "Everyone has believed in *Santa Claus* at some time in their life," he says. (The Salkinds certainly have; and still do!). "This film should appeal to every possible category of human being." Huh? Including the blind, the terminally ill, the imprisoned...? there's even one "category of human being" which never goes to the cinema or watches cassettes. Ilya!

Alexander — The Great?

Ilya's father, of course, is Alexander Salkind. Asked about him recently, David Newman (who scripts the *Superman* and *Santa Claus* movies with his wife, Leslie) said Alex spends his life moving from one fading, luxury hotel to another — "they all look like that hotel in *The Shining*." Alex also refuses to fly anywhere — and hates cats. "He loved it when Superman saved a cat because he thought the audience was going to be terrified by the scene." More from David about Alex later...

Gremlins II?

Chief among mini-mogul Charles Band's '84 programme is his answer to Joe Dante's *Gremlins* down in Spielberg country. *Ghoulies*, Charlie calls them. The creatures, much uglier than ET, are also designed by John Buehler. Actor Luca Bercovici directs them among various humans, including *Eraserhead*'s John Nance and Mariska Hargitay. Buehler did not design her. Mickey Hargitay and the late Jayne Mansfield did. She's their daughter.

INDIANA JONES & THE TEMPLE OF DOOM



INDIANA JONES... we always knew the daredevil archeologist would come walking (or more probably running) back onto our cinema screens. Yes, in the grand tradition of classic pulp heroes everyone's favourite schoolteacher-cum-explorer, as personified by Harrison Ford in the internationally popular *Raiders of The Lost Ark*, returns for more action-packed adventure in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.

The new film re-unites the successful partnership of director Steven Spielberg and executive producer George Lucas, along with some of the most experienced motion picture technicians in the business. Filmed on three continents, *Indiana Jones* takes Indy and his two new companions – nightclub entertainer Willie Scott and a Chinese kid called Short Round – through a steady stream of perils, from the seedy backstreets of Shanghai to the Indian splendors of a Maharajah's palace, many thrills and spills on promised along the way.

Principal photography began over a year ago on April 18, 1983 on the tropical island of Sri Lanka, and later all the units left this exotic location to film on huge jungle sets at EMI-Elstree in the not-so-exotic Borehamwood on the outskirts of London. Following the three intense months of the Elstree shoot, the technical blue screen sequences were shot at Lucasfilm's very own Californian facility in Marin County. Additional sequences were shot at other Northern California locations, including Hamilton Air Force Base, which doubled as the Shanghai Airport, and action scenes were shot at Mammoth Mountain and the American and Tuolumne Rivers. Principal photography was completed on September 8, 1983, while the optical and special effects wizardry continued right up until March this year at Lucasfilm's Industrial Light and Magic SPFX unit.

Sri Lanka offered Lucasfilm every conceivable variation of scenery, including thick jungles, rugged mountains, lush valleys and impressive rock formations, giving the production team the visual splendor they were looking for as a backdrop to Indy's daring exploits. Filming began on the Hantane Tea Estate situated high above the town of Kandy in the provincial hinterland. Amid the tea bushes, the art department built an Indian village, circa 1935. A newly constructed set was more practical than employing an existing village, since the site ►



INDIANA JONES & THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

► had to appear alternatively desolate and then lush and prosperous.

Towards the end of the second week, the main unit was joined by the second unit, which had just finished filming a car chase sequence in the narrow streets and back alleys of Macau. With two units shooting side by side in Sri Lanka, Spielberg was organising the filming of perilous exploits on a specially constructed rope bridge spanning a gorge more than three hundred feet deep. This looks to be one of the exciting highlights of the picture. "We were lucky enough to find an accessible gorge right nearby a construction site where a British company was building a large dam," notes producer Robert Watts. "Thus, we had top-notch engineers and workers with convenient equipment to string the bridge for us with steel and cable. Once the bridge was up, we dressed it up to look old and rickety."

When the *Indiana Jones* production team moved from Sri Lanka to England, they made use of virtually every stage at Elstree Studios, including Stage Six, the vast *Star Wars* Stage. Veteran production designer Elliot Scott was given the task of creating the film's many architectural splendors and diverse environments. The most breathtaking of these is the Temple of Doom itself, housed



Above: Harrison Ford stars as the daredevil archeologist, looking as astonished as ever, in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. Top right: Sporting the remnants of a shirt, Indy crosses a rickety rope bridge on his quest for the Temple of Doom. Far top right: A quick change of clothes transforms Indy into Dr Jones, Professor of Archeology, but he is still in need of a shave. Far right: Accompanied by nightclub singer Willie Scott and a cute Chinese kid called Short Round, Indy makes his way through an Indian village. Below right: The rugged features of Indiana Jones. Below: A romantic interlude between Indy and Willie Scott (played by the captivating Kate Capshaw).





inside the elaborate Pleasure Pavilion of the Palace of Pankot. Scott's other creations include the exotic interiors of Indy's Suite and Willie's Suite at the Palace, a sinister Spike Chamber, a vast quarry set which dominated the immense *Star Wars* Stage, a labyrinth of mine tunnels and mine caverns, the interior of the amusingly named Oblivion Nightclub in downtown Shanghai, and a jungle clearing, complete with an elephant, matching one featured in sequences filmed in Sri Lanka. Scott has worked on early Hitchcock thrillers and major musicals and later designed the rich atmospheres of such films as *The Haunting* and *Dragonslayer*.

Like its predecessor, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* has a primary concern of action all the way, with many cliffhanging, careering special effects and stunts. Special effects supervisor George Gibbs and stuntmen Vic Armstrong claim to have concocted new



thrills never before seen on film. Gibbs was also involved in recent fantasy blockbusters *Superman*, *Flash Gordon* and *Conan the Barbarian*.

The title role (Indiana Jones that is; the Temple of Doom appears as itself!) is of course once again played by Harrison Ford (for career information refer to the detailed biography, *The Harrison Ford Story*, by *Starburst* editor Alan McKenzie). Joining the whip-wielding hero this time round is Willie Scott, a captivating nightclub singer, portrayed by Kate Capshaw (recently to be found in *Dreamscape*). Distinguished British character actor Philip Stone, who was featured in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange*, *Barry Lyndon* and *The Shining*, plays Captain Blumburt, a British officer whom Indy meets at the mysterious Palace of Pankot.

As well as bringing Lucas and Spielberg together again, *Indiana Jones* is produced by

Robert Watts, who is working on his fifth picture for Lucasfilm. Steven Spielberg's longtime associates Frank Marshall and Kathleen Kennedy are, respectively, co-executive producer and associate producer. The screenplay is by the award-winning team of Willard Huyck and Gloria Katz based on a story by George Lucas.

Other familiar Lucasfilm names who have contributed to *Indiana Jones* include popular composer John Williams once again providing the score; visual effects supervisor Dennis Muren, heading the team of SPFX technicians at ILM; and film editor Michael Kahn, the Academy Award winning editor of *Raiders* who has also edited four other Spielberg films.

Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom is on release across the country from June, and going on the film's locations (not to mention the talented names involved) it is a high-adventure full of Eastern promise.

FANTASY FILM CHART '84



Compiled by Tony Crawley

Odd year, '83. Flick through your **Starbursts** neatly threaded into those great Napier & Son binders and it looks a vintage twelvemonth. Two Bonds. Badmen here, Badmen there. Steve King — and Dave Bowie — and Zanes — all over the place. *Xtro*, *Dark Crystal*, *Tenebrae*, *Psycho II*, *Superman III*, *Halloween* too (well, III). 3-D trying (not) hard with the third *Jaws* and *Amityville* and first, doubtless the latest, *Metastorm* and *Spacehunter*. And then *Thriller* to wind it up. Oh yeah, hectic year.

Yet look for any of them in the chart and that's another hour gone out of your life — even though, as always, after the top five, all new entries are in bold type to help you trace your fave rave of the year under review.

The '84 chart reads like '83's; well, almost. And as the typing all this data (no computers at **Starburst**; least none in **Starburst**: France... I've got a neat bunch of binders, though), I look forward to some annual fluctuation in the placings. Some rise and fell. I love to see the thing breathe.

So few surprises this year, the chart is well high comatose. Few changes until we get to a whole slew of entries in the (very) lower depths. Obviously, the chart grows annually due to a new crop of releases to list; this time I've gone to 260 titles just to get some of the '83 films in, plus many from 1980-onwards we never had room for before. (And if I don't keep this intro short, we won't have room this time, either.)

The reason for this inertia is, natch, George Lucas of Marin County. He's the king of death to any fantasist, veteran or rising blade, Dick Fleischer or Tony Scott, stupidly opening films around George's summer blitzkrieg. Yup, once again, the latest (last?) *Star Wars* chapter rules the roots for the box-office year. Or, in America, at least, where it trounced everything in sight — which must make Dustin Hoffman sick. In any normal (Lucas-less) year, *Tootsie*'s \$94m would have romped it; I mean, that's more than the now-combined rentals for both *CEKs*. In fact and figures, *The Return of the Jedi* beats *Dusty's* drag act by as much as \$71m — roughly the combined rentals of *War Games* and *Supie III*. Well, of course, it did. *Jedi* is George's fourth winner in succession to beat the \$100m barrier. The guy's a m-a-z-i-n-g, Ewoks or no damned Ewoks.

Helluva boost for Richard Marquand's career, of course. He's now the highest-placed British director in both our chart and film history placings. His last outing, *Eye of the Needle* (1981) remains 69th in history, with rentals of \$6,715,370... miles away from being No 3 with \$165m inside six months, huh?

So, *Jedi* did far better than *Empire*. Not enough to topple *E.T.* (the '83 British box-office champ) from the No 1 spot it gained late last year, ending *Star Wars*' six-year reign. An U.S. re-issue, worth an extra \$22m (just beating *Blue Thunder*!), means the little chap and his "little film" is now atop the first recorded rents beyond \$200m! That, too, is an immense switch from Steven Spielberg's movie debut, *The Sugarland Express*, which earned rentals of a mere \$2,890,000 ten years back!

Rentals? Yes, rentals. As explained each year, all figures listed here (culled, as always, from *Variety*'s all-time box-office champs' lists) are not the actual box-office takes (*E.T.* is above \$350m in ticket-money), but the percentages due to the distributors. ... And as I've lately been compiling a filmography and, er, photography for *Le Zénith* edition of my Spielberg book, let me lay another new figure on you: Spielberg's eleven films as director/producer have now earned rents of \$638,321,547. Enough to buy Britain, I'd say. The Lucas biggies, alone, are around \$672,860,000...

With *Jedi* moving into 3rd slot, Spielberg's other record has momentarily tumbled. It's now Lucas, not Spielberg with three in the top five. Steven has to settle for three out of six. George is more reliable in pulling off what *Variety* calls the movie version of the four-minute mile (\$100m rentals). *Twilight Zone*, for example, hardly performed to plan by settling for 65th place with a mere \$16m, a worse return than his other almighty flop, 1941. And even with Columbia finally combining the rents of both *Close Encounters*, that film is still \$16.5m off the century target — although knocking *Supie I* and *II* back down the top ten a bit.

Which reminds me, *WarGames* did better than *Supie III*, so that is the end of Clark Kent as we know him. I guess. This year, *Supergirl* Come to that, *Optocopy* did better than *Never Say Never* again (as in Britain and France, too). That battle is far from over. Sean's comeback had only been out for three months and should make up the meagre \$8m difference alone next year. *Moonraker* remains the top Bond (it's *Thunderball* in real money, but these are not *Variety*'s inflation-related figures; *see need computers*). And I really wonder how much *Optocopy* would have done without all the hype of the two 007 films. Just think if Moore's had opened after Sean's...

Only other high flier within the top 50 is... *Jaws 3-D*, now the No 1 tri-d effort around. So maybe, just maybe, the abortive com-

THE CHAMPION!

1 (1) **E.T. THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL**/director Steven Spielberg/1982. Home. And safe, \$16m away from inevitable rival. Easily holding top spot due to best re-issue take since *Star Wars* in '78. The extra 22.5m makes the 'little film' the first in movie history to vault the \$200m barrier to... \$209,567,000.

REST OF TOP FIVE

- (2) **STAR WARS**/George Lucas/1977. Surely His Lucasship is also into \$200m territory, but no one's letting on how much those triple *Wars/Empire/Jedi* bills are earning (or how to divide the take?). For now, figures same as last year. \$193,500,000.
- (3) **RETURN OF THE JEDI**/Richard Marquand/1983. Messive welcome in the Beverly Hillsides for Welshman Marquand's entry into megamovies. Top US film of '83, crushing *Tootsie* by \$70m, so it's the only newcomer in our Top Twenty. \$165,500,000.
- (4) **THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK**/Irvin Kershner/1980. Slipping, not sliding and hardly denting anyone's image, certainly not George's as all his biggies bust the \$100m mark. \$141,600,000.
- (5) **JAWS**/Steven Spielberg/1975. Still the golden oldie of the upper fifth (or top ten next year). Worth a re-issue. It made 11m last time out; earned a platinum video cassette since then which could mean the end of it in cinemas. \$133,435,000.

REST OF OUR TOP TEN and places in history

- (6) **RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK**/Steven Spielberg/1981/the '83 re-issue didn't help much (3.6m, compared to 21.5m in '82), but then 'tis the biggest thing in video now. Steven Spielberg now has three in top six not five, but wait for *Indy's Temple of Doom*... \$115,598,000.
- (7) **THE EXORCIST**/William Friedkin/1978/dropping from 7th to 9th in history after *Grease* and *Tootsie*. \$89,000,000.
- (8 & 145) **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND**/Steven Spielberg/1977. Some place but surpassing *Superman II* as Columbia's accountants, or Spielberg's image, finally demand that both the original and *Special Edition*'s takes be added together; makes sense... and 11th place after *The Godfather*. \$83,452,000.
- (9) **SUPERMAN II**/Richard Donner/1978/tough luck, *Supie*, now 12th in history not 8th — unless *Salkinds* start adding the trio together! \$82,000,000.
- (10) **SUPERMAN I**/Richard Lester/1981/20th in history after (deep breath) *Sound of Music*, *Sting*, *Gone With the Wind*, *Saturday Night Fever*, *National Lampoon's Animal House*, *Nine to Five*, *Rocky III*; earned a platinum cassette, too, like *Muscle* and *House*. \$65,100,000.

eback is not yet over. All other 3-Ds has yet to earn budgets back, though. Audiences appear to want familiar subjects in 3-D — Bruce rather than *Jerd-Syn*. Imagine *E.T.* in 3-D...!

being the top 100 (all others being missed oldies, in for sheer interest), it is, by a way, a most miserably year. *Cujo* doesn't make it until 112. Oh sure, audiences were up. Almost everywhere, even cassette-happy Britain. But it is noticeable that for the first year since *Star Wars* started making it happen in '77, it wasn't just fantasy the public was after. *Comedy* was king, although *King of Comedy* was not — even *For* that. (Moral: Never, *evah* use Jerry Lewis.) John Landis, for example, is

17th and 54th in box-office history due to *Animal House* and *Trading Places*, and not *American Werewolf* or *Twilight Zone*.

There might be a moral in there. Some place. We'll see, come *Dune*, 2010, *Gremlins*, *Sheena*, *Conan II* and *Star Trek III*.

Meanwhile, do have fun meandering around the chart; it is packed with interest. Just as the Lucasberg remain steady around or beyond the \$100m mark, so do the likes of Carpenter, De Palma and J. Lee Thompson around much lower areas. All the money's in dollars; movie moolah. Double it, at least, for Sterling (remember Sterling?). Even if you just use it all to settle bets about which years films will be about, or who directed which — enjoy yourself.

ONWARD TO ENCOMPASS THE TOP TWENTY

- 11 (10) STAR TREK/Robert Wise/1979/56m/hanging on by its ears.
- 12 (11) JAWS II/Jeannot Szwarc/1978/55.6m/Jaws 3-D didn't come close.
- 13 (12) THE TOWERING INFERNO/John Guillermin/1975/burning bright at 52m.
- 14 (13) AIRPORT/George Seaton/1970/45.6m/flying high as ever; next one is a fl.
- 15 (14) ALIEN/Ridley Scott/1979/45m/so where's the sequel already...?
- 16 (15) THE POSEIDON ADVENTURE/Ronald Neame/1972/unsinkable at 42m.
- 17 (28) SNOW WHITE/animation/1937/huge leap for Disneykind as '83's second-best re-issue doubling the 46-year-old take to 41.4m.
- 18 (16) AIRPLANE/Jim Abrahams, David & Jerry Zucker/1980/40m/the sequel crashed.
- 19 (17) STAR TREK II: THE WRATH OF KHAN/Nicholas Meyer/1982/wunnerful in its 40m wrath - and platinum cassette.
- 20 (18) YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN/Mel Brooks/1975/38.8m/moral: direct, Mel; don't 'act'.

READY OR NOT, HERE'S THE TOP FIFTY SLAB

newcomers in bold type

- 21 (21) POLTERGEIST/Tobe Hooper ('tis said)/1982/holding own by revised 37.6m.
- 22 (19) KING KONG/John Guillermin/1976/36.9m, sweet Jessica...
- 23 (—) WARGAMES/John Badham/1983/computes at 36.6m, but in Jed's same eight months.
- 24 (—) SUPERMAN II/Richard Lester/1983/36.4m from 35m budget/The End. Obviously.
- 25 (20) EARTHQUAKE/Mark Robson/1974/36.2m/like who remembers it anymore...?
- 26 (22) THE AMITYVILLE HORROR/Stuart Rosenberg/1979/35m/ten times early 3-D figure.
- 27 (23) MOONRAKER/Lewis Gilbert/1979/33.9m/the educating of Cubby...? Top Sean-less Bond but doubled by Nine to Five, beaten even by Party's!
- 28 (—) OCTOPUSSY/John Gilbert/1983/32.2m from budget; bettered by *Staying Alive*/So Travolta as 007, Cubby?
- 29 (24) THE SHINING/Stanley Kubrick/1980/still the top Steve King flick at 30.9m.
- 30 (25) THE OMEN/Richard Donner/1976/28.5m/beats both sequels... combined.
- 31 (26) THUNDERBALL/Terence Young/1965/28.5m/beats the re-read; in real money beats 'em all.
- 32 (27) BAMBI/animation/1942/27.8m/but wait for its re-issue...
- 33 (29) FOR YOUR EYES ONLY/John Gilbert/1981/26.5m/rubbin' but bettered...
- 34 (—) JAWS 3-D/Joe Alves/1983/26.1m, made 26.4m; a flop but top 3-D film.
- 35 (30) THE CHINA SYNDROME/James Bridges/1979/26m/a real science fact.
- 36 (31) AIRPORT 1975/Jack Smight/1975/23.9m/after than *Airplane*.
- 37 (32) THE BLACK HOLE/Gary Nelson/1979/24.4m/less than *Cinderella*: more red than black.
- 38 (36) FIREFOX/Clint Eastwood/1982/25m/*Sudden Impact* did as well - in a month.
- 39 (—) NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN/Irvin Kershner/1983/25m in three months, should do better; has to, cost 34m.
- 40 (33) POPEYE/Robert Altman/1980/24.4m/just not enough spinach.
- 41 (51) PETER PAN/animation/1953/24.5m/more than *Gandhi*; Spielberg & Michael Jackson readying their version for '85.
- 42 (34) THE SPY WHO LOVED ME/Lewis Gilbert/1977/24.3m/just less than *Gandhi*.
- 43 (35) 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY/Stanley Kubrick/1968/24.1m/the cost of 2010!
- 44 (—) 1941/Steven Spielberg/1979/23.6m/back in for Spielberg watchers.
- 45 (36) THE DARK CRYSTAL/Jim Henson, Frank Oz/1982/23.3m/but it cost 28m. Whoops.
- 46 (38) CONAN THE BARBARIAN/John Milius/1982/23.3m/wonder it's a kid's weekend sequel.
- 47 (39) GOLDFINGER/Guy Hamilton/1964/22.8m dollars and Pussy Galore.
- 48 (40) FANTASY/animation/1940/21.7m/enough to be-wig Bald Mountain.
- 49 (—) BLUE THUNDER/John Badham/1983/21.7m/cost 22m, we relate more to 'puters than choppers.
- 50 (41) LOVE AT FIRST BITE/Stan Dragoti/1979/20.8m/sheer Hamilton, by George!

STOMACH ENOUGH FOR... THE TOP 100?

- 51 (42) DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER/Guy Hamilton/1971/19.6m/Sean's last is topped by Sean's newest last...
- 52 (43) YOU ONLY LIVE TWICE/Lewis Gilbert/1967/19.4m/Bondo-san in Japan.
- 53 (44) HIGH ANXIETY/Mel Brooks/1977/19.1m/hall-cooked Hitchcock send-up.
- 54 (46) TIME BANDITS/Terry Gilliam/1981/18.9m/Koed *Blade Runner*.
- 55 (45) HALLOWEEN/John Carpenter/1978/18.5m/can *Christine* do as well?
- 56 (47) CLASH OF THE TITANS/Desmond Davis/1981/17.9m/applaudium cassette, too.
- 57 (48) FRIDAY The 13th/Sean Cunningham/1980/17.1m/fm speechless...
- 58 (50) EXCALIBUR/John Boorman/1981/17.1m/survived poor to *Scalibur*.
- 59 (49) A CLOCKWORK ORANGE/Stanley Kubrick/1971/17.1m/truh parable.
- 60 (57) TRON/Stephen Lisberger/1982/rejiggered from 15.2m to 16.7m.
- 61 (52) FRIDAY The 13th - PART 3/Steve Miner/1982/16.7m longer top 3-D film at 16.5m.
- 62 (53) AIRPORT 177/Jerry Jameson/1977/16.2m worth of Lemmon fizz.
- 63 (54) PETE'S DRAGON/Don Chaffey/1977/16.1m/it's called Elliott.
- 64 (54) FLASH GORDON/Mike Hodges/1980/16.1m/where's Sam Jones now?
- 65 (—) TWILIGHT ZONE - THE MOVIE/Landis, Spielberg, Dante, Miller/1983/16m/do anthologies ever do well?
- 66 (—) TARZAN THE APE MAN/John Derek/1981/15.8m/over to you *Greystoke*...
- 67 (56) LIVE AND LET DIE/Guy Hamilton/1973/15.8m/Moore's first.
- 68 (—) PSYCHO II/Richard Franklin/1981/15.6m/hardly worth the effort.
- 69 (58) PLANET OF THE APES/Franklin J. Schaffner/1968/15m in the beginning.
- 70 (59) ROSEMARY'S BABY/Roman Polanski/1968/15m/now *Rose*'s Woody's.
- 71 (58) CARRIE/Brian De Palma/1976/15m/Sissy's better, Brian isn't.
- 72 (58) DRESSED TO KILL/1980/Brian De Palma/1980/15m/consistent, isn't he?
- 73 (—) HIGH ROAD TO CHINA/Brian Thorton/1983/15m/ *Raiders*, it wasn't.
- 74 (63) BLADE RUNNER/Ridley Scott/1982/14.8m/unkind cut out of all.
- 75 (62) COMA/Michael Crichton/1978/14.6m/s really full-bodied work.



- 76 (64) AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON/John Landis/1981/14m/*Thriller's* Pa.
- 77 (65) EXORCIST II: THE HERETIC/John Boorman/1977/13.9m/the pits.
- 78 (66) LORD OF THE RINGS/Ralph Bakshi/1978/13.7m/so he's quit animation.
- 79 (67) OMEN II: DAMIEN/Dan Taylor/1978/13.6m/vomitous warning.
- 80 (68) ALTERED STATES/Ken Russell/1980/12.5m/too much SPFX junked.
- 81 (69) CHARIOTS OF THE GODS/Harold Rein/1973/12.4m/sing low, sweet...
- 82 (70) DRACULA/John Badham/1979/12.4m/Chris Lee coming back as *Dracula*.
- 83 (71) QUEST FOR FIRE/Jean-Jacques Annaud/1982/12.25m a lasting gem.
- 84 (71) THE ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW/Jim Sharman/1975/12.21m/midnight special.
- 85 (73) THE FURY/Brian De Palma/1978/12.17m/not that consistent.
- 86 (74) THE FINAL CONFLICT/Graham Baker/1981/12.15m/adieu, Damien.
- 87 (74) HALLOWEEN II/Rick Rosenthal/1981/12.06m/beats his boss' *Thing*.
- 88 (75) BUCK ROGERS IN THE 25TH CENTURY/Daniel Haller/1982/12.01m/top tele-switch.
- 89 (75) THE ELEPHANT MAN/David Lynch/1980/12.01m/*Dune*'s busting all over, soon.
- 90 (77) CAPRICORN ONE/Peter Hyams/1978/12.01m/next *Odyssey* Two.
- 91 (78) BEYOND AND BACK/James L. Conway/1978/11.7m/there is life after death.
- 92 (79) GHOST STORY/John Irvin/1981/11.5m/isn't there, though?
- 93 (80) WHEN A STRANGER CALLS/Fred Walton/1979/11.4... you hang up!
- 94 (—) AIRPLANE II: THE SEQUEL/Ken Finkleman/1982/11.34m/crash on take-off.
- 95 (89) MAD MAX II/George Miller/1982/11.3m/cos the Yanks called it *Road Warrior*.
- 96 (82) 20,000 LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA/Richard Fleischer/1954/11.26m/Jaws' mum.
- 97 (83) PSYCHO/Alfred Hitchcock/1960/11.2m/beats *Psycho* in real loot.
- 98 (84) INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS/Philip Kaufman/1978/11.1m/not quite the right stuff, so pod off!
- 99 (85) THE FOG/John Carpenter/1980/11m/maybe John's fog lifting now.
- 100 (85) THE SWORD AND THE SORCERER/Albert Pyun/1982/11m/Albert who...?

AND INTO THE NEXT CENTURY

- 101 (87) MYSTERIOUS MONSTERS/R. Guenette/1975/10.91m/the joker int' pack.
- 102 (89) ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK/John Carpenter/1981/10.9m/it were a Carpenter...
- 103 (88) THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE/Richard Friedenberg/1978/10.8m/who jokers...?
- 104 (94) HEAVY METAL/Gerald Potterton/1981/10.54m/Canada animation lives.
- 105 (89) THE THING/John Carpenter/1982/10.5m... I'd try harder.
- 106 (93) MONTY PYTHON'S LIFE OF BRIAN/Terry Jones/1979/10.5m/more meaning in this life.
- 107 (92) PROPHET/John Frankenheimer/1979/10.48m/comes on like '49.
- 108 (132) SWORD IN THE STONE/Wolfgang PETERMAN/1963/10.45m/re-issues work!
- 109 (—) CASINO ROYALE/Guest, Hughes, Huston, McGee, Parrish/1967/10.2m/the Bond that got away from Cubby; from everyone!
- 110 (96) OUTLAND/Peter Hyams/1981/10m/2010 should rescue Pete's act.
- 111 (108) CREEPSHOW/George Romero/1982/10m/but enough for a sequel.
- 112 (98) RUN RUSSIA WITH LOVE/Terence Young/1964/9.8m/ah, Daniela...
- 113 (99) THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING WOMAN/Jojo Schumacher/1981/9.806m/small fry.
- 114 (—) CUJO/Lewis Teague/1983/9.8m/not enough bogs.
- 115 (100) ESCAPE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN/John Hough/1975/9.6m/bewitched, bothered.
- 116 (100) LOGAN'S RUN/Michael Anderson/1976/9.5m/never materialized.
- 117 (100) FRIDAY THE 13TH II/Steve Miner/1981/9.5m/very minor indeed.
- 118 (103) ORCA/Michael Anderson/1977/9.43m/let's hear it for Bo Derek!
- 119 (104) THE MAN WITH THE GOLDEN GUN/Guy Hamilton/1974/9.4m... and for Chris Lee!
- 120 (105) WILLARD/Delbert Mann/1973/9.3m/you dirty rat!
- 121 (106) ON HER MAJESTY'S SECRET SERVICE/Peter Hunt/1969/9.1m/00 - Worst.
- 122 (109) ROLLERBALL/Norman Jewison/1975/9m/Jimmy Casn't win 'em all.
- 123 (109) AIRPORT 80 - THE CONCORDE/Robert Lowm/1978/9.8m/Grating, more like it.
- 124 (110) THE LATE GREAT PLANET EARTH/Robert Altman/1978/9.8m/Grating, more like it.
- 125 (111) THE ANDROMEDA STRAIN/Robert Wise/1971/8.66m/strain is right.
- 126 (111) BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES/Ted Post/1970/8.6m/2nd.
- 127 (—) KRULL/Peter Yates/1983/8.5m/for too; even *Straker* Ace beat it.
- 128 (113) THE CAT FROM OUTER SPACE/Norman Tokar/1978/8.47m/here, kEty, kEty!
- 129 (115) THE HOWLING/Joe Dante/1981/8.4m/but just wait for *Germans*...



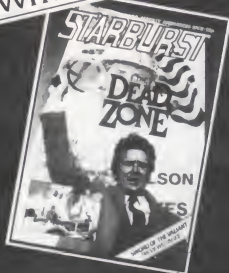
- 129 (114) **DARBY O'GILL AND THE LITTLE PEOPLE**/Robert Stevenson/1959/8.3m/overdue for a re-issue: it's a-mazing.
- 130 (134) **VISITING HOURS**/Jean-Claude Lord/1982/8.2m/carry on worse.
- 131 (—) **THE DEAD ZONE**/David Cronenberg/1983/8.15m/after three months biz.
- 132 (—) **SPACEHUNTER: ADVENTURES IN THE FORBIDDEN ZONE**/Lamont Johnson/1983/8.13m/another 3-D flop.
- 133 (116) **SLEEPER**/Woody Allen/1973/8.055m/s literal sleeper.
- 134 (—) **BLOW OUT**/Brian De Palma/1981/8.1m/Jaws who keep working? Why!
- 135 (117) **SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER**/Sam Wanamaker/1977/7.9m/Rocky's fave?
- 136 (118) **SILENT SCREAM**/Denny Harris/1979/7.9m/Enter: Barbara Steele.
- 137 (119) **THE SWARM**/Ivan Allen/1978/7.7m/Clive James' fave.
- 138 (120) **FAMILY PLOT**/Alfred Hitchcock/1976/7.58m/last from The Maestro.
- 139 (121) **GRIZZLY**/William C. Girdler/1967/5.9m/just past paws.
- 140 (122) **RETURN FROM WITCH MOUNTAIN**/John Hough/1978/7.3m/Drac vs Baby Jane.
- 141 (148) **REAR WINDOW**/Alfred Hitchcock/1964/7.28m/re-issue moving it up.
- 142 (123) **BEYOND THE DOOR**/Oliver Hellman/1975/7.14m/lock it - fast.
- 143 (123) **IT'S ALIVE!**/Larry Cohen/1977/7.1m/then again, was it...?
- 144 (—) **BATTLESTAR GALACTICA**/Richard Colla/1978/7.1m.
- 145 (126) **WESTWORLD**/Michael Crichton/1973/7m/TV Brynner as Threepio.
- 146 (126) **HALLWEEH**/N. Season of the Witch/Tommy Lee Wallace/1982/7m/dislike.
- 147 (—) **MONTY PYTHON'S MEANING OF LIFE**/Terry Jones/1983/9.9m/meaningful.
- 148 (128) **FRIDAY**/Alfred Hitchcock/1976/6.9m/last made-in-Britain.
- 149 (129) **RAISE THE TITANIC**/Jerry Jameson/1980/6.5m/let it bleed.
- 149 (129) **DRAGONSLAYER**/Matthew Robbins/1981/6.5m/oh dear, deane deane.
- 151 (131) **THE FINAL COUNTDOWN**/Don Taylor/1980/6.7m/Sheen, no shine.
- 152 (134) **TIME AFTER TIME**/Nicholas Meyer/1979/6.5m/the days before.
- 153 (—) **ZELG**/Woody Allen/1983/6.5m/just call him Woody.
- 154 (136) **NORTH BY NORTHWEST**/Alfred Hitchcock/1959/6.4m/masterly.
- 155 (137) **DR NO**/Terence Young/1962/6.35m/land all the re-runs...?
- 156 (140) **PHANTASM**/Don Coscarelli/1986/6.2m/who understood it?
- 156 (140) **SCANNERS**/David Cronenberg/1981/6.2m/too many panners?
- 156 (—) **THE ENTITY**/Sidney J. Furie/1983/6.2m/inda Hershey bar.
- 159 (138) **THE HIGH AND THE MIGHTY**/William Wellman/1946/6.1m/Airport's Pa.
- 160 (153) **HOUSE OF WAX**/André de Tott/1953/6m/rig-jig of 82 figures.
- 160 (139) **METECOR**/Ronald Neame/1979/5.9m/Snuggles.
- 160 (140) **FROM NIGHT TO NIGHT**/Paul Lynch/1980/5.9m/why Jane Lee quit the genre.
- 160 (141) **AMITYVILLE II: THE POSSESSION**/Damiano Damiani/1982/6m/Don Delirium.
- 160 (—) **THE NIGHT STUFF**/Philip Kaufman/1983/6m/lost 27m: fantasy sells better than fact.
- 165 (146) **RACE WITH THE DEVIL**/Jack Starrett/1975/5.6m/Fonda Satanists?
- 167 (147) **HANGAR 18**/James L. Conway/1980/5.7m/UFos, the bad way.
- 167 (148) **ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE APES**/Don Taylor/1971/5.6m/3rd one.
- 168 (150) **THE INCUBUS**/John Hough/1982/5.5m/take the incubus instead.
- 169 (151) **FANTASTIC VOYAGE**/Richard Fleischer/1965/5.5m/Raquel's the guide.
- 169 (151) **BARBARELLA**/Roger Vadim/1965/5.5m/another pin-up trip.
- 169 (151) **HERO AT LARGE**/Martin Davidson/1980/5.5m/Capt. Avenger games.
- 169 (151) **CAT PEOPLE**/Paul Schrader/1982/5.5m/another Nasty Kinski flop.
- 173 (155) **BIRDS**/Alfred Hitchcock/1963/5.38m/genius in full flight.
- 174 (156) **FLESH GORDON**/Howard Ziehm/1974/5.3m/hard or soft version?
- 175 (156) **THE CHANGELING**/Peter Medak/1980/5.3m/not as good as a resting.
- 176 (173) **THE SECRET OF NIMH**/Don Bluth/1982/5.27m/is he lost to vid-games?
- 177 (158) **THE LEGACY**/Richard Marquand/1978/5.27m/but the clip from *Jedi*!
- 178 (158) **DEATH RACE 2000**/Paul Bartel/1975/5.25m/bats Eating Raul.
- 179 (160) **MONTY PYTHON & THE HOLY GRAIL**/Terry Gilliam & Jones/1975/5.17m.
- 180 (161) **GODLY VOYAGE OF LINDBERGH**/Gordon Hessler/1974/5.14m/Singod to me.
- 180 (162) **MANIAC WILLIAM SUTHER**/1981/5.1m/has no comment at this time.
- 182 (163) **SOMEWHERE IN TIME**/Jeannot Szwarc/1980/5.09m/timeslipped.
- 183 (179) **THE BEASTMASTER**/Don Coscarelli/1982/5.09m/Conan the Vegetarian.

- 184 (164) **DAMNATION ALLEY**/Jack Smight/1977/5.03m/Hollywood sf. until Lucas.
- 185 (165) **KING KONG**/Merian C. Cooper/1933/5m/means what in today's lure?
- 186 (165) **DR. STRANGELOVE OR: HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB**/Stanley Kubrick/1964/5m/Reagan's fave rave?
- 187 (165) **THE REINCARNATION OF PETER PROUD**/J. Lee Thompson/1975/5m/who saw it?
- 188 (165) **COMIN' AT YA**/Ferdinando Baldi/1981/5m/charted for reving 30.
- 188 (169) **HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO ME!**/J. Lee Thompson/1981/4.98m/many bloody returns.
- 190 (169) **SATURN 3**/Stanley Donen/1980/4.9m/music man shoots sf...!
- 191 (171) **MOBY DICK**/John Huston/1956/4.8m/Jaws' Poppa.
- 192 (171) **THE LEGEND OF BOGGY CREEK**/Charles B. Pierce/1972/4.8m/a creeker.
- 193 (175) **JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH**/Henry Levin/1959/4.77m/boring!
- 194 (176) **ON THE BEACH**/Stanley Kramer/1959/4.77m/yesterday's Day After.
- 195 (177) **FRITZ THE CAT**/Ralph Bakshi/1977/4.7m/wizard, it wasn't.
- 196 (177) **FLESH FOR FRANKENSTEIN**/Paul Morrissey/1974/4.7m/30, too.
- 197 (180) **WIZARDS**/Ralph Bakshi/1977/4.65m/wizard, it wasn't part II.
- 198 (181) **THE SENTINEL**/Michael Winner/1977/4.62m/terrible, not terror.
- 199 (182) **CONQUEST OF THE PLANET OF THE APES**/J. Lee Thompson/1972/4.5m/4th one.
- 200 (182) **WOLFEN**/Michael Wadleigh/1981/4.5m/from a 17m budget; owch!

SHALL WE TRY FOR... 260?

- 201 (184) **THE SPACEMAN AND KING ARTHUR**/Russ Mayberry/1979/4.47m/goofy.
- 202 (185) **SLAUGHTERHOUSE 5**/George Roy Hill/1972/4.4m/perfect gem.
- 203 (186) **MARCOONED**/John Sturges/1964/4.35m/ring stuff, wrong year.
- 204 (189) **GALAXINA**/William Sachs/1980/4.35m/starring Star 80, herself.
- 205 (187) **NIGHTMARE/Romano Scavolini**/1981/4.3m/Tom Savini wiped his name off it.
- 206 (188) **THE AWAKENING**/Mike Newell/1980/4.25m/Chuck Heston's Mummy.
- 207 (—) **THE HOUSE ON SORORITY ROW**/Mark Rosman/1982/4.2m/De Palma pupil's debut.
- 208 (180) **THE BAD SEED**/Mervyn LeRoy/1964/1m/this kid's a killer.
- 209 (191) **WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?**/Robert Aldrich/1964/4.05m/Sister Dearest!
- 210 (192) **BATTLE FOR THE PLANET OF THE APES**/J. Lee Thompson/1973/4.02m/last one.
- 211 (—) **GALAXY OF TERROR**/B.D. Clark/1980/4.8m/Taffee O'Connell gets slayed.
- 212 (193) **WIZARD OF OZ**/Victor Fleming/1939/4.6m/Gary Kurtz sequel costs 20m!
- 213 (193) **THE NUTTY PROFESSOR**/Jerry Lewis/1959/4.6m/when Jerry was funny.
- 214 (193) **THE OMEGA MAN**/Boris Sagal/1971/4.6m/Heston goes ape as last earthing.
- 215 (193) **THE STEPFORD WIVES**/Bryan Forbes/1975/4.6m/new clones for old clones.
- 216 (193) **THE FOOD OF THE GODS**Bert. Gordon/1976/4.6m/Bigs are better.
- 217 (193) **FUTUREWORLD**/Richard T. Heffron/1976/4.6m/Brynner's Threepio, again.
- 218 (193) **THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU**/Don Taylor/1977/4m/Logan's Hun.
- 219 (—) **FORBIDDEN WORLD**/Allan Holzman/1982/4.6m/Corman's alien gets cancer.
- 220 (—) **SORCERER**/Brian Stuart/1983/4.6m/Corman's sword 'n' skin 'n' twins.
- 221 (—) **THE FUNHOUSE**/Tobe Hooper/1981/3.8m/lost without Spielberg.
- 222 (—) **HERCULES**/Luigi Cozzi/1983/3.8m/bnng back Steve Reeves!
- 223 (—) **MAD MAX II**/George Miller/1980/3.5m/due to U.S. dubbing.
- 224 (—) **TERROR TRAIN**/Roger Spottiswoode/1980/3.5m/see his *Under Fire*.
- 225 (—) **AMITYVILLE 3**/Richard Fleischer/1983/3.5m in 2 months: won't improve.
- 226 (—) **NIGHTMARES**/Joseph Sargent/1983/3.1m/less Twilight than Moon Zappa Zone.
- 227 (—) **BRAINSTORM**/Douglas Trumbull/1983/3.03m/saddest chart news.
- 228 (—) **FEAR NO EVIL**/Frank La Loggia/1981/3.0m/Carnie On Living Dead Ones; kinda.
- 229 (—) **HEARTBEATS**/Allan Arkush/1981/3m/wasted by studio.
- 230 (—) **BATTLETRUCK**/Harley Kozlikis/1982/3m/wasted by Corman.
- 231 (—) **SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES**/Jack Clayton/1983/2.9m/called Disney.
- 232 (—) **BLEEDING**/Wes Craven/1981/2.8m/snakes alive - in the bath!
- 233 (—) **METALSTORM: THE DESTRUCTION OF JARED-SYN**/Charles Band/2.75m/metal-breeze!
- 234 (—) **PARASITE**/Charles Band/1982/2.75m/3-D, as above, didn't help.
- 235 (—) **DON'T GO IN THE HOUSE**/Joseph Ellison/1980/2.69m/incinerating!
- 236 (—) **MY BLOODY VALENTINE**/George Mihalko/1981/2.65m/Coal Miner's Slaughter.
- 237 (—) **FADE TO BLACK**/Vernon Zimmerman/1980/2.4m/a mini-classic.
- 238 (—) **THE HEARSE**/GEORGE Bowers/1980/2.3m/last ride.
- 239 (—) **SWAMP THING**/Wes Craven/1982/2.12m/bad for Craven image.
- 240 (—) **THE CHILDREN**/Max Kalmanowicz/1980/2.1m/Midwich Cuckoo rip.
- 241 (—) **THE HUNGER**/Tony Scott/1983/2.07m/late the future...
- 242 (—) **YOR, THE HUNTER FROM THE PLANET ANTONIO**/Margherita/1983/2.05m/your bimble!
- 243 (—) **MORTUARY**/Howard Avedis/1983/2.02m/stab 'n' slab.
- 244 (—) **LOOKER**/Michael Crichton/1981/2m/French rescuing it.
- 245 (—) **VENOM**/Piers Haggard/1982/2m/another the nasty Kinski.
- 246 (—) **TIMWALKER**/Tom Kennedy/1982/2m/one angry Mummy.
- 247 (—) **STUDENT BODIES**/Mickey Rose/1981/1.76m/Woody's a mess sends up genre.
- 248 (—) **DON'T ANSWER THE PHONE**/Robert Hammer/1980/1.75m/because...
- 249 (—) **HE KNOWS YOU'RE ALONE**/Armand Mastroianni/1980/1.75m/that kind year.
- 250 (—) **THE MAN WHO WASN'T THERE**/Bruce Malmuth/1983/1.5m/3-D flops again.
- 251 (—) **VAMPIRE PLAYGIRLS**/V. Schloss/1980/1.3m/Schloss schlock.
- 252 (—) **VIDEODROME**/David Cronenberg/1983/1.3m/back to the draining board!
- 253 (—) **FINAL EXAM**/Jimmy Huston/1981/1.28m/said: Jimmy!
- 254 (—) **CATHY'S CURSE**/Eddy Matalon/1980/2.2m/Canadian creepo tid.
- 255 (—) **RESURRECTION**/Daniel Petrie/1980/2.2m/censored, not released.
- 256 (—) **DEATHSTALKER**/J. Watson/1983/2.1m/Corman but beat King of Comedy.
- 257 (—) **PIECES/Juan Piquer**/1983/1.8m/Human jigsaw via chainsaws...
- 258 (—) **THE EVIL DEAD**/Sam Raimi/1983/1.7m/better bid in Europe, eh Sam?
- 259 (—) **1990: THE BRONX WARRIORS**/Enzo G. Castellari/1983/1.5m/Vic Morrow's penultimate movie.
- 260 (—) **TESTAMENT**/Lynne Littman/1983/1.04m/cinema's Day After; only better.

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Splash



Splash is reviewed on page 40 this issue.



AT THE DEEP END WITH DIRECTOR RON HOWARD

by Alan Jones

Everyone knows who actor Ron Howard is. America knows him primarily for his role as little Opie on *The Andy Griffith Show*. The rest of the world knows him as Richie, the clean cut all-American teenager from the hit television series *Happy Days* which owed its genesis in part to Howard's performance in *American Graffiti*. Now with *Nightshift* — his first major studio film — and *Splash* behind him, it's full-fledged director with the flair and sensitivity necessary to become one of the great luminaries of the motion picture industry.

Howard made his screen debut at the age of 18 months and can remember, even as a child, that directing was always his primary goal. He began with 8mm films at the age of 15 and his directorial debut came in 1974 (for who else but Roger Corman?) with *Grand Theft Auto* which he also co-wrote and co-starred in with his father, Rance. *Grand Theft Auto* was well received commercially and critically and it marked producer Corman's first sale to network television. Howard subsequently directed three movies for television, *Cotton Candy*, *Through the Magic Pyramid* and the award-winning *Syward* with Bette Davis. The latter was such a ratings winner that it led Howard to make the final decision concerning which way his career was going.

When I caught up with Ron Howard at his new base in 20th Century-Fox's Hollywood studios where he is currently pre-producing Zanuck and Brown's *Cocoon*, he was direct, honest and somewhat taken aback by the *Splash* phenomenon that has literally changed his life.

"Candidly speaking, the movie is going over better than anybody had guessed. The critics love it and the audiences seem to love it. I care very much about *Splash* but even I am surprised at the amount of media exposure and attention it is getting. It seems to have captured everyone's imagination — and that's more than I had dared hope for".

But first things first. Producer Brian Grazer began developing the story for *Splash* four years ago, mainly, by his own admission, to see one of his richest fantasies come to life. And Ron Howard soon joined him on this quest. "Brian was my producer on *Nightshift* and early on in that film's life he told me he



Director Ron Howard.

had a script and would like me to read it as a friend. I did, and after a few rewrites were done on it, I read it again and really liked it. *Nightshift* was such a great experience for all of us and at about the time of the wrap date, I learned that *Splash* had been dropped by United Artists. There was a chance all of a sudden for me to become involved and as I had liked the idea, that is precisely what I did. That was about 2½ years go — so all in all I've known about the project for three years."

Immediately Grazer and Howard set about revamping the script and reworking its structure and to do this they brought in the successful *Nightshift* team of Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel. "They really are two of the funniest writers going and they added the humour. The script definitely got funnier the moment they entered the scene. What interested me the most, and what I worked on the most was the humanity of the story. I didn't want the relationship to get slighted in any way and that was what I always seemed to be harping on about. Brian is a really hip kind of guy, so he wanted it contemporary. Ganz and Mandel were always structuring these really funny scenes and I was always talking about the characters. So together all are attitudes were reflected in the

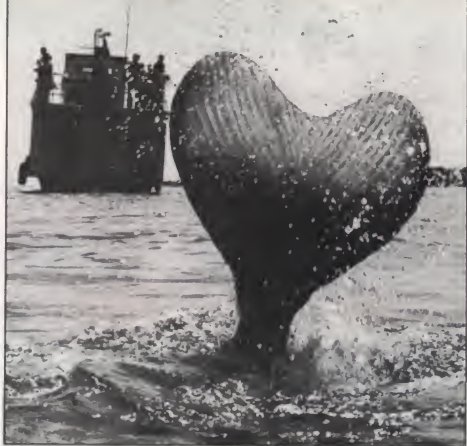


Splash

◀ final product and it was a blend that worked extremely well. As is so often the case, although we were all such totally different individuals, we seemed to spark and work well together. *Splash* is certainly everything I wanted it to be. It fulfilled itself pretty well and lived up to my expectations of it.

After United Artists dropped *Splash*, it was the turn of the Ladd Company to pick it up as a go project. Both organisations however were in agreement over one thing. The ending had to be changed. "At one point we didn't really go for a happy ending, more for a bitter-sweet one. Actually all of our wives protested about that so much that we listened to them — and I'm so glad we did! We used to have a whole fantasy sequence where you actually went into the Mer Kingdom and saw how these creatures lived. I always believed in that ending but it was much too expensive to do as it turned out and we had to let it go. Probably in retrospect that was also a good move too. You cared about the above-the-water story — that was where the comedy and the relationship was — the mermaid part of the picture became decreasingly the most important part. It is there of course and it is the quality that makes *Splash* special but it doesn't really have anything to do with the basic theme."

Enter the Walt Disney studios who needed to have a hit film after the string of financial disappointments they had weathered with the likes of *Dragonslayer*, *Tron* and *Something Wicked this way comes*. *Splash* seemed to be the sort of film they should be making in the '80s. "I always expected Disney to be nervous but they never were. I think they always knew that they wouldn't put the Disney name on the picture but they had liked *Nightshift* and they made a point of telling us



Above: The tail-end of a mermaid is sighted from a cruise boat. Below: A mysterious blonde beauty, who called herself Madison (Daryl Hannah), is arrested at the Statue of Liberty after walking nude through a crowd of astonished tourists.

that they wanted us to make *Splash* in the same way we would have made the movie at any other studio. I thought that was just lip-service at first but in actuality we never got the dreaded Disney Memo I was always expecting."

Howard had never made a fantasy picture before but he instinctively knew what he would have to keep in his mind. "The point is you have to create a set of rules for yourself and strictly adhere to them even though it might get easier to change them at some point. You have to let the audience get the feeling for those rules too. That is something I had only read about in fantasy film journals and while I can't really remember any specific instances, it was a lot trickier to do than I had at first thought. We had to still make the film

imaginative but stick to those rules. Finally what we did was establish them point blank in the film but what we discovered in editing was that we didn't really need to tell them as long as the audience could sense that we — the makers — were grounded in them. As a result we wound up cutting most of the fantasy-based exposition, for example, what it was like to be a mermaid. The stated rules were cut — we just let them be witnessed instead. It was an invaluable lesson and it worked well in context. The most important aspect of the film was to make the possibility of mermaids a reality. Obviously the audience has to be willing to suspend their disbelief for two hours and if they aren't willing to, well then, they won't like the movie. We wanted to make it easier for people to like it





Allen Bauer (Tom Hanks), a New York bachelor who unwittingly falls in love with a mermaid, agonizes over a fishy headline.

and also win over the borderline cases. That was the first thing I looked for in our preview screenings and it was amazing to see how easy to achieve that was. It was such a crucial part of the picture that I was pleased and proud to have mastered it."

Howard is quick to point out though how Daryl Hannah's contribution was equally as important to the success of the picture. "She understood the character so well and was able to create a very specific one for the mermaid. She thankfully did not allow herself to drift into a cryptic alien sort of behaviour. Everybody falls in love with her because she is so positive about everything. Daryl handled the underwater work amazingly well. It was believable to us even though we were underwater making the film! At one point we even had some small pilot fish follow her around which, I assure you, doesn't happen to experienced skin divers. I thought that was the best tribute possible to Daryl and the designers of the tail. Her moves seemed so organic, you would lose track of the fact that she was wearing a suit."

Not that there weren't problems with the design of the fin. "There were modifications for ever. We had to play around with texture, colour and bulk. At one time we had something we thought looked pretty good. It looked sensual and terrific from the front but when viewed sideways it looked like a giant goldfish swallowing Daryl's legs! Needless to say that was axed. Finally May Routh, our costume designer, came up with the colour and Bob Short, who worked on *E.T.*, the design and fin placements. At first we thought the idea of a mermaid having legs on land would be an impossible stunt to pull off. But we found we had a precedent for that in the Anderson fairy tale. In that story the little mermaid is given legs by a witch in return for her voice with the curse that if she doesn't get a prince to marry her, she will turn to foam. We didn't want our story to be that dark and I certainly didn't want to have to resort to magic. Then we saw a Renaissance painting depicting "The Odyssey" and it showed the

sirens luring voyagers to their deaths on the rocks. The sirens were shown as having fins in the water, scales that melted away when they were half in-half out of the water and legs on board. That is where our inspiration stemmed from concerning the transformation and as it was based in something concrete, I didn't have a problem with it the way I thought I would. I accepted it, so therefore, so would the audience because I believed in it."

All the pros and cons were explored about underwater filming, according to Howard. "We knew *Splash* would be much more believable if we could just get on and do it. The more we learned about Daryl's abilities, the more we did away with wires and pulleys. At one time we were thinking about using little model mermaids that would swim around but that proved redundant with Daryl on top form. I had things I wanted to be able to do like zoom away in the water, like *Superman*, but the water proved so difficult to work in that it was virtually impossible to do any of that. Daryl said the tail was very easy to swim in — it was murder for her out of water — but she could easily outdistance the scuba divers. One wire actually did show in the final print but we excused it prior to release. It really surprised us what actually did show upon the big screen."

And despite rumours to the contrary, nothing — nudity included — was censored by Disney or the ratings board in the final release print of *Splash*. "For a fleeting moment after post-production, the film received an R rating but it was something the studio knew nothing about. We did discuss then, ways of making it fall into the PG category because that is what we all wanted. But we decided to wait until it was formally rated before making any rash decisions. And when it was formally rated it got a PG. So we had gone into a flap for nothing after all."

Splash in my view goes to some lengths to reinforce the established old fashioned values inherent in the movies from Hollywood's glittering heyday. In many ways Howard agrees with that observation. "There's a

lot of truth to that statement. I've always felt slightly out of date. That is why I felt I needed Brian's hipness to infuse into the project. I learned my comedy foundation with Andy Griffiths who dealt in humanistic comedy — it wasn't broad but it did stress moral values. I tend to be rather idealistic which is why I adore Frank Capra's movies. I try not to deal with the hard edge but that is ultimately what I have to look for to include because I just don't want to end up being sappy and silly. The one drama that I directed — my transition from television to film — I found to be the easiest project I've ever done. It was a crowd pleaser but it wasn't the same sort of thing as sitting with an audience and hearing them laugh out loud and watch them smile on the way out. I've acted in drama so I have a feel for it but I think I know what it takes to create a comedy that is a successful diversion that much more. People seem to appreciate that one area so much that I find I'm becoming far more satisfied with that aspect of my career. I think everybody finally gets pushed into their niche. Well, if comedy turns out to be my forte, I won't complain at all. But, of course, if I can broaden as well I would prefer it if I could include other styles and genres."

And *Cocoon* may well be the film to provide Howard with what he's looking for. Howard begins location shooting in Florida in June for this Fox financed adaptation of the David Saperstein novel which is being held back to tie in with the film's release next year. Ralph McQuarrie has already signed on as production designer-cum-visual effects consultant and while it sounds like a horror movie, *Cocoon* is in fact a science-fiction thriller. It concerns the survivors of Atlantis who have colonised another world in our galaxy and who have sent down an envoy to search for some dignitaries they left behind cocooned in a state of suspended animation after the flight from their doomed city. The cocoons are located just off the coast of St. Petersburg in Florida, so the Atlanteans rent a house as a base next to an old folks home. The alien race never die and have the gift of telepathy, so with the aid of some instinctively friendly dolphins they easily retrieve the cocoons and store them in their swimming pool. But unknown to them, the elderly folk have been sneaking in to use the pool and as the days go by they get strangely rejuvenated by the cocoons' power. When they are discovered the Atlanteans offer the senior citizens the chance to join them in peace on their planet as they would like to witness the long term effects of their power on the human race for possible future earthly unions. The rest of the story highlights the anguished decisions of the tightly knit pensioners and how one of their grandsons nearly undermines their escape mission.

Says Howard, "There is humour in *Cocoon* but I wouldn't call it a comedy. I'm not quite sure yet of the direction we'll take with it but it won't be as broad as *Splash*. It doesn't have many jokes it's just laced with humour like when the retired folk go to a local disco and wow the local teens with their breakdancing expertise. That is one of my favourite scenes in the script and I'm really looking forward to doing it. What attracted me to *Cocoon* was its positiveness and the opportunity it presented to work with a bunch of actors you probably haven't seen for a while. I've never done an ensemble movie before. At the moment it looks like Maureen Stapleton will be the star and it is a risky project in so far as that I have to make an audience identify with such elderly characters but that is what I'm most excited about delving into. At the moment *Cocoon* is just beginning to gel for me so I find it very hard to talk about." **FIN**



Starburst looks at this and the other video games of animator Don Bluth

Feature by Tony Crawley

For those of us anxious for a new film from Don Bluth, the man who put some zip back into animation, the wait goes on. And on... Don is making movies, though. The *Dragon's Lair* video game (see *Starburst* 68) is a smash. Now *Space Ace* is cleaning up. And *Dragon's Lair II* and *Sea Beast* are already on the drawing-boards of Don's 22 animators. We've not heard much about these subsequent ventures in Europe, much less seen them. Not yet. That's a shame because the films continue Don's much applauded aims since quitting Disney—the restoration and furtherance of high quality classical animation.

They also introduce some memorable new heroes...

Take the title star of *Space Ace*, for instance. Your average, inter-galactic, tall, handsome, blond super-hunk, traversing the heavens in the good ship, *Star Pac*, with his feisty gal, Kimberly, when *kerpow!* Space is aced. The plot's double-dyed baddy, Borf, zaps him with his Infanto Ray and old Spacey is young again — kinda kryptonised in his other, earlier self. He becomes Dexter, a small, puny kid. No muscles, no more. No Kimberly, either. Borf snatches her and whizzes away to start taking over the world by turning everyone else into kids...

In order to get Kim back and save the world from having to wear short pants for life, Dexter is up against his own ineffectual youth, not to mention Hexter — his inevitable dark side. (What's good enough for Luke Skywalker and Hitchcock is good enough for Dexter!)

But that's ain't all. Far from it.

He has to tackle various monster robots and 'droids. "What would space be without them?" asks Don Bluth. Hence the giant, whirling 'droids with spinning, drilling armatures that can literally bore someone to death; robot guards with laser-blasters; and a bunch of free-floating dastard things with handle-bar-moustaches — Le Grins.

That's still not all.

The Carnicula is a carnivorous alien plant with creeper vines. The Shag is a horned wildebeest which eats a lot. There are the ferocious Space Pups, giant eels, Squidants (and don't they sound awful?), the Grumlets, spiky Security Spheres, sanitational Auto Brooms ('no, don't ask!), trash-mashers, cathod ray tube emulsifiers, dirt-biking Babaloons armed with machine guns and... well, enough's enough. I think you get the picture: Dexter wishes he'd stayed in bed.

Don Bluth may have made the movies, but you control the action. Just how long Dexter can be a real Ace or how often *Dragon's Lair's* Dirk can be will be truly Daring depends on you, friends. And your joysticks.

Dragon's Lair was the most successful — what's more important, the most influential game put out in America last year. It topped everything else on the coin-operated market, like *E.T.* trouncing every other movie in sight. Since July '83, *Lair's* flair sold





some 8,000 units. That's a gross income of \$43 million... from an animation budget outlay of \$1.2 million. About the price of a Spielberg trailer.

And like next season's *Omo or Tide*, *Space Ace* is all new, all improved! It cost only \$600,000 more to make and is expected to match, if not double the first game's business, particularly as the *Lair*'s one main fault (the screen blacking out as the computer programming ferrets out the next sequence according to how the game is being played) has been brilliantly ironed out for the even faster-moving exploits of *Ace*.

And so that is why we've not had what we must now refer to as a regular movie from Don Bluth since his great debut feature, *The Secret of NIMH* in 1982. That was a fine beginning, yet no vast hit in global cinemas. "But there is an audience for this sort of entertainment," stresses Don. "If there weren't, sales of the *NIMH* video wouldn't have been so high."

Ironically, Don found his missing audience with his video games. That's where all the teenagers and people in their 20s were — in the video arcades. "And they were crowded around *Dragon's Lair*," he says with a smile in his art studio at Studio City, California.

Cause of more smiles — the awards won by *Dragon's Lair*. Just as *NIMH* won trophies like the Saturn Award as best animated feature from the American Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films, Don's video-game picked up an Inkpot Award at the San Diego comicon, an achievement award from a similar Minneapolis convention for "advancing the realm of animation with the creation of the video game" and an Arkie from Electronic

Games magazine for the best arcade audio visuals in 1983.

However, the actual creator of the games is Rick Dyer. At 29, he runs Advanced Microcomputer Systems and the RDI Video System combines. (Bluth's company joins forces with both to form Magicom, Inc., originally called Starcom).

Rick toiled on his games concept for a full five years, while anxiously watching the rise (and then, the fall) of the Atari type computer-graphics games as he searched for, above all, a better quality picture. The answer was two-fold. Animation, for starters — enter smiling Don Bluth. Second, putting the finished show on an interactive laser video-disc to allow for the all-important player-participation quotient.

Rick's ideas certainly appealed to Don. "The combination of animation and computers is a natural," he says. "Our aim was to combine them in a manner that would be popular while, of course, maintaining the high quality of classical animation artistry which we have made our hallmark."

"We've also opened the door to an entirely new realm of uses for character animation — and for the future uses of lasers. We've married art and high technology."

Don was in the midst of designing *Space Age* when the first game was released last summer. He was soon staring in wonder, he recalls, when reports came in that several college students were getting close to figuring out all of *Dragon's Lair*'s intricacies within a few weeks. And this long after Rick Dyer had revised the game after locating a shortcut he hadn't realised was built into his first designs.

"I thought the whole concept of Total Resolution Graphics and the changing angles would have stumped them for at least a couple of weeks," laughs Don. "So, I purposely made the first game easier than it could have been. But when I heard they were cracking it before September, I resolved to make *Space Age* a real challenge for them."

And not only them. The new and successive games have to be tougher because several other combines are homing in on Bluth and Dyer territory. Games called *Mach III*, *Cliffhanger*, *Star Rider*, and *Astron Belt* are out or due into arcades soon. Atari and Paramount are also due to deliver laser-games utilising real movie footage from Clint Eastwood's *Firefox* and the new *Star Trek III* film. Competition is hot.

"Computers are here to stay," considers Don of his current work, "and they have much to give us if we help them. It's time for animation to grow. It started as a novelty, but its potential is to tell stories that cannot otherwise be told."

Yeah, well, that's all fine and dandy but, as I pressed him, when does he get back to making regular movies again — if ever?

"Although our involvement with the interactive laser video-disc arcade-game industry has, indeed, been fruitful," he says, "we are, I think, film-makers at heart. With the overwhelming success and popularity *Dragon's Lair* has continued to enjoy, we have not only been encouraged to create a sequel to the original game — *Dragon's Lair II: The Time Warp* — but also expect to be in production with a motion picture version of *Dragon's Lair* by August."

And, then he added: "We do have two other feature film projects waiting in the wings, as well..."

Well, praise be Dirk the Daring and *Space Ace* for keeping Bluth in business!

"The impact of animation is special," Don underlined. "You can say things with it you cannot say elsewhere. People are, many times, more susceptible to the messages coming from anthropomorphic representations of themselves and their acquaintances than they are with real-life actors. Animation can scar your brain!"

Next stage: The Talkies!

The brain behind Bluth's amazing games, Rick Dyer, claims one giant leap for player-kind with his next game. *Thayer's Quest* is designed by Rick's RDI team of 25 game-writers for the home market on a special machine utilising both laser-disc technology and a computer with speech-recording and speech-synthesis systems.

Title apart, the game is on the top secret list. But from what I can piece together from my spies is that while the player-participation factor will naturally be continued, the actual destiny of the new game will not merely be in the hands on the joystick — but in the player's mouth, as well. *Thayer's* a sayer. A game you can talk to and it'll talk back to you!

"It's the ultimate form of entertainment," says Rick in the time-honoured expression since the movies began. He could be right, though. "You'll be able to step into the looking-glass. You'll be able to hear it, feel it, talk to it and it will hear you and be able to understand you."

Sounds rather like life itself to me. "It's so realistic," stresses Rick. "That the player becomes so immersed that he cannot differentiate between fantasy and reality. This game is so advanced, it's like something straight out of 2001. Only it's real..."

THE (Dino) SAURUS

Part Two

Feature by Leslie Ford

1958

TEENAGE CAVEMAN: Cult Roger Corman movie with Robert Vaughn. Set in a post-apocalypse world complete with men in suits and stock footage from *One Million B.C.* 65 mins.

MONSTER ON THE CAMPUS: A below average Jack Arnold movie. Arthur Franz becomes infected by prehistoric *Ceolacanth* fish and turns into a Troglydite-type monster murdering co-eds. 76 mins.

1959

GORG0: The mama and son monsters were labelled as prehistoric in this British production using Toho technology, but they were imaginary dinosaurs. 77 mins.

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH:

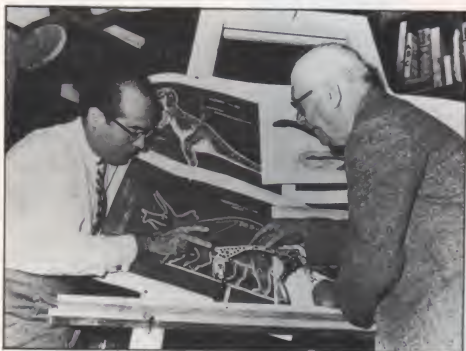
Thanks to Bernard Hermann's powerful score, *JTTCOTE* appears to be a much better picture than it actually is. Henry Levin's direction is, for the most part, pedestrian and at 132 minutes it's definitely on the long side. The dinosaur sequence is disappointing with some uncomfortable looking lizards dressed up with fins and frills and then enlarged optically. Starring: James Mason and Pat Boone.

HERCULES: This Steve Reeves Italian sword and sandal actioner featured a Theropod as one of Herc's nemesis. It was played by a man in a suit. Rumours that Steve Reeves was also played by a man in a suit are probably unfounded. 107 mins.

BEHEMOTH THE SEA MONSTER: Despite Willis O'Brien's involvement, *Behemoth* is real Grade Z monster fare. The animation is relegated to a few cuts and like *Behemoth* itself, the whole film plods. 80 mins.

1960

THE LOST WORLD: Made to cash in on the success of *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*, this Cinema-Scope, colour remake of the '25 classic looks pretty dull today. Willis O'Brien's name is on the credits, but he was allowed to do nothing towards the production. One highlight is Claude Rains as a feisty Professor Challenger. Supposed dinosaurs were once again dressed up lizards and stock footage from the movie turned up later in director/producer Irwin Allen's TV series *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* and *The Time Tunnel*. Starring Claude Rains and Michael Rennie. 98 mins.



Above: Director Irwin Allen (left) confers with master animator Willis O'Brien on the model armatures used in a ten-minute dinosaur sequence, devised by Obie and executed by Ray Harryhausen, in *The Animal World*. Below: A stop-motion dinosaur battle animated by Harryhausen for *Valley of the Gwangi* (1969). Far right: A photo-montage publicity still for *Caveman* (1981) featuring Ringo Starr astride a strange-looking dinosaur and co-Starr Barbara Bach in the foreground.



Your Guide to Prehistory in the Movies

DINOSAURUS: Pretty much a kiddie movie in which a small boy befriends a Brontosaurus which has been revived by lightning along with a Tyrannosaurus and a cave man. A battle between the latter dinosaur and steam shovel climaxes the film, but is a better idea than the B feature budget allows. The model of the brontosaurus later used in the *Twilight Zone* episode *The Odyssey of Flight 33*. Directed by Irwin Allen. 98 mins.

1961

MYSTERIOUS ISLAND: Jules Verne's semi-sequel to *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* benefited greatly from Ray Harryhausen's stop motion effects, which while just mostly enlarged animals and insects (bees, crab, etc) also contained the prehistoric creatures Cephalopod and a Phororhacis, a giant flightless bird – thought by many at the time of the film's release to be a big chicken. 100 mins.

VALLEY OF THE DRAGONS: Amid stock footage from *One Million B.C.* Cesar Danova and Sean McClory find themselves whisked off on a comet of prehistoric origins. From the Jules Verne stories, *Off On A Comet* and *Hector Servadac*, though you'd hardly ever know. 79 mins.

1963

REPTILICUS: A truly terrible movie. The giant winged monster maybe prehistoric, but it's totally imaginary – and it spits radioactive goop too! Directed by Sidney Pink. 81 mins.

1967

ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.: An almost 'grunt for grunt' remake of the 1940 production. Now more famous as the movie which introduced Raquel Welch and in so doing created one of the great icons of the pin-up poster trade of the late 60s. Harryhausen's effects are o.k. and the creatures include a Brontosaurus (all but cut from the movie prior to release), pterodactyl and a mean-minded Allosaurus, among others. Directed by Don Chaffey. 100 mins.

ZEPPELIN vs PETRODACTYLS: An unmade David Allen project which was originally to be called *Raiders of the Stone Ring*. Hammer Productions touted the artwork for it under the former title in 1969 and then Allen revamped the material for the also unfilmed *The Primevals* in 1977.

LA ISLA DE LOS DINOSAURIOS: A Mexican movie with stock footage from *One Million B.C.* Directed by Raphael Portillo.

1968

JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF TIME: Yet another cheap mix of SF and prehistory with aliens and stock footage from, you guessed it – *One Million Years B.C.* Directed by David L. Hewett.

1969

VALLEY OF GWANGI: This adaptation of an unfilmed Willis O'Brien story is almost 100% successful in its blending of cowboys and prehistoric varmint. Gwangi is an Allosaurus and one of Ray Harryhausen's best creations which at times recalls his Ymir from *Twenty Million Miles to Earth*. The climax in which Gwangi breaks out of a cage, battles a (partly) animated elephant and finally perishes in a burning church is a real tour de force of animfx. Directed by James O'Connelly. Starring: Gustavo Rojo, James Franciscus, Gina Golan. 95 mins.

1970

TROG: Not sure which is more frightening and/or ludicrous – the Troglodyte or Joan

Crawford as a scientist! A Herman Cohen production. Directed by Freddie Francis. 91 mins.

DINOSAURS... THE TERRIBLE LIZARDS: A documentary with a variety of dinosaurs. Stop motion effects supplied by Wah Chang.

1971

WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH: Another re-working of *One Million Years B.C.* from Hammer, Jim Danforth and Roger Dickson built and animated a whole menagerie of monsters, not all bona fide dinosaurs. Best sequence is watching a baby dinosaur hatching out of an egg. Delightful. Directed by Val Guest. 100 mins.

1972

SCHLOCK: John Landis' first feature is basically a clever parody of *Trog*, among others which include 2001. The Troglodyte was played by Landis in a suit created and built by Rick Baker. 80 mins.

1974

THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT: An entertaining, albeit juvenile, action-packed adventure featuring some adequate giant rubber dinosaurs courtesy of monster-making Roger Diken. Directed by Kevin Connor. Based on the novel by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Starring Doug McClure, John McEnery and Susan Penhaligon. 91 mins.

1975

THE ANIMAL WITHIN: A documentary feature with some dinosaur footage.

1977

SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER: Harryhausen's penchant to include at least one

bona fide prehistoric creature in most of his pictures continued with *Eye of the Tiger*. In this there's a Smilodon, a giant sabre-toothed cat which battles with an equally outsized Troglodyte. 113 mins.

CRATER LAKE MONSTER: Low budgeter with just passable fx featured a Plesiosaurus. **PLANET OF THE DINOSAURS:** A kiddie feature with a variety of dinosaurs well animated by Doug Beswick.

THE PEOPLE THAT TIME FORGOT: An inferior sequel to *The Land That Time Forgot* with some tatty pterodactyls. Directed by Kevin Connor. Based on the novel by Edgar Rice Burroughs. Starring Patrick Wayne, Sarah Douglas and Dana Gillespie. 90 mins.

1981

CAVEMAN: Send up of prehist-ric movies. Often funny it features some splendid stop motion animation and a great sequence with a stoned and overweight Tyrannosaurus. Starring Ringo Starr and Barbara Bach.

1982

QUEST FOR FIRE: Really a re-working of *One Million B.C.* done in a pseudo-documentary style. Highly entertaining and often funny, it features some reluctant elephants dressed up as woolly mammoths.

1983

Q: THE WINGED SERPENT: A mythical prehistoric snake/bird comes to New York and munches on the locals. A very entertaining Larry Cohen comedy horror film with some nifty effects and lots of blood and gore.

WARGAMES: John Badham's anti-technology briefly contained some stock footage from *The Animal World*.

BABE: A Walt Disney live action comedy about a baby dinosaur.



INTERVIEW:

Joe Dante

Part Two



Last issue, director Joe Dante spoke about his involvement in *The Twilight Zone* and the forthcoming fantasy release *Gremlins*, both Steven Spielberg productions. In this second part of the interview, Dante discusses his early career, toiling at the house of Corman, New World Pictures, in the trailers department, expresses some forthright opinions about the current horror crop coming out of the American film-making machine and explains exactly what is meant by the term "exploitation film".

Interview by Phil Edwards and Francesca Landau



Starburst: How much would you say you learned from Roger Corman?

Joe Dante: How much? Plenty! Everything I know...

Well, I was going to ask "What?" but you've answered that!

You learn to do everything yourself at Roger's. You learn what everybody else does, because chances are, on your first picture that nobody doing it knows any more about what they're doing than you know about what you're doing! So there's a tremendous cross-fertilisation when you're working for Roger because everybody has to have an interest in what everybody else is doing... because you're doing it so quickly that if it doesn't all get done you're going to end up being behind. Which is the worst thing that can happen on a Roger Corman movie. Because "behind" means an extra day and an "extra day" might mean a fifth of the budget!

That's on a technical level. Just on a movie level, because the material you are working with at Roger's might not be of the highest calibre, you learn to make a piece of entertainment that will succeed primarily on the speed and energy that it presents to the audience.

People that have worked for Roger and have tried to be indulgent other than in the way he wants - in other words somebody who wants to make a picture for Roger about some major theme and he lets them make the picture and then they are dismayed when



Opposite above: Anthony's "family" regard one of his apparitions with horror in the Dante directed segment of *The Twilight Zone*. Opposite below: Two patrolmen search a porn shop looking for *Karen White* in *The Howling* (1981). Above left: Rob Bottin, a frequent Dante collaborator, puts the finishing touches on the make-up for the Terry Fisher character (Belinda Balaski) in *The Howling*. Above right: Shooting a scene for *The Howling* with Slim Pickens, John Carradine and Patrick Macnee. Below: A portrait of Kathleen Quinlan as she appeared in *The Twilight Zone*.



he cuts out the "major theme", because that's not what he was interested in in the first place. On the other hand, you can make a picture about a theme at Roger's if you subordinate it to the action, which is something that is true of his own pictures. I've seen enough of Roger's pictures – in fact I've seen all of Roger's pictures – to be able to say there are definite themes that run through the movies. And knowing Roger I'm perhaps a little more aware of what they are and where they come from than a lot of people that don't know him. Nonetheless Roger's movies have *things* in them, they are *about things* and yet he'd be the first person to deny that they were about anything. "It's a picture about a guy with X-ray eyes! It's not a picture about death!" "It's not a picture about the end of the world!" Well, it is a picture about those things, and it makes it a better picture. It gives it a more innate resonance because beyond the lurid goings-on on the screen there is something happening, and you can do that when you work for Roger, but you can't do it by having character talk about it and you can't do it in too sophisticated a way, because he is notorious for just wanting to lop out huge chunks of the picture when the audience gets restless. He always previews the pictures with an audience on Hollywood Boulevard, or somewhere like that. The most frightening term that can be heard from Roger at a time like that is when something gets a "bad laugh". A "bad laugh" is when the audience laughs in the wrong place as opposed to a "good laugh" when they laugh in the right place!

Sometimes, when people work for Roger and they feel they have to parry the material because it's so dated, or old-fashioned, or it's silly, then they and Roger will come to loggerheads as to what is a "bad laugh" and what's a "good laugh". A "bad laugh" is anyplace they are laughing where, had Roger made the picture, *he* wouldn't want them to laugh. So, when it came to a picture like *Deathrace 2000*, Paul (Bartel, the director) put in many, many laughs and Roger did not see the picture as comedy, although it is about running people over to score points, there's really no other way you could see it! He went through the picture and excised a number of jokes, that sort of left the picture with a series of rising actions with no conclusion at the end of them. It makes it one of the odder movies.

If you take a bad movie like *Night of the Cobra Woman*, then it doesn't matter how much you cut out. You might as well let them laugh because at least they're having a good time. If you just cut out everything that's funny and that's all the picture had going for it, was that it was bad, then it's like being stuck with a porno movie without the porno, just bad lighting! However, with *Deathrace*, people were laughing in the right places because Paul had put

Joe Dante



tures and I'd think, "Oh my god, how can I justify this!" But then I realised that everybody makes horrible pictures no matter how good they are, everything can't be good all the time.

As far as exploitation pictures being better thought of, I don't know. Here in L.A. there's a tendency, for some reason, for the *Los Angeles Times* (the city's major paper) to do at least every couple of months, a big cover story in their Sunday edition about some exploitation picture being made. They did one about *The Being*, one about *Chained Heat*, *Graduates of Malibu High* or *The Young Warriors* and they did one about *Private School*. And people write in the following Sunday and ask, "Why are you writing about this trash?" And I, frankly, can't understand why they are writing about it, because personally I haven't experienced any change in people's attitudes towards exploitation pictures. I think, that if anything, now, they have gotten so grungy and scuzzy and snuffy, that people are more outraged than ever about them. And there are so many of them out there. How many more "summer camp movies" can there be? How many more pictures about guys with axes? I think when somebody comes along and makes a picture like *Ms. 45*, which is a much better made picture than usual and quotes from Polanski and Hitchcock among others, that people sit up and say, "This guy could be pretty good." Or a David Lynch makes an *Eraserhead*... then obviously you are dealing with somebody out of the ordinary, somebody who's got some kind of different talent. But in general, if anything, the level of exploitation pictures is pretty low.

Above: Long-time Cormanite Mery Woronov as she appeared in the first ever movie to credit Joe Dante as a (co)director, Hollywood Boulevard. Below: Pam Grier (most recently seen as the Dust Witch in *Something Wicked This Way Comes*) battles for her life in *The Arena* (1973) which Dante was the film editor.



► these jokes in and Roger did not appreciate the jokes; he didn't see them as jokes, he just saw them as silly and he couldn't understand why this horror/action movie had all these silly scenes in it and so he excised a lot of them. I think the picture still works because the overall tone of the movie is so crazy, there's no mistaking it as a comedy. But it was a funnier movie before Roger cut a lot of stuff. On the other hand Roger added a lot of action to it, which it didn't have before, so commercially, he probably did the right thing. I've always contended that there was room for both aspects in that movie and that he could have had the action movie he wanted and it could have also been funny. The one thing he and I seem to disagree on is that exploitation movie audiences go to the movies to have a good time and that they don't find laughing in the middle of a scene to be an upsetting experience; that is something they enjoy and it just helps things. If you've ever gone to any of the Italian zombie or chainsaw pictures, the audience is in stitches throughout the entire movie. They love to see people being cut up with chainsaws, but apparently they don't take it very seriously at all and so, they just roar!

It's taking out any sort of potential reaction the audience may have...

It's part of manipulation. I think Roger likes to feel that he's manipulating them all the way and there's no room for them to dredge up emotions of their own, that weren't asked for. I think he looks at other people's pictures as if he had made them. That can be very frustrating for somebody and it can also be very interesting because he has improved a number of pictures. He has been able to go through and say, "Take this out, take this out." I think the fact that he seems so cavalier about doing that with other people's pictures has sort of been good for me as it's made me kind of cavalier about my own pictures. So when I made my first movie and we started to cut it, I had no compunctions whatsoever about cutting tons and tons of it out. I didn't feel protective of it. I didn't think, "Oh, this took me all day to get this shot, this is a great shot." Well, maybe it is a great shot, but if it's in the wrong place or it slows the movie down, out it comes. There are many things that I've done, nice little moments that I've kind of liked and shown at a preview. The audience didn't like it there, there was no other place to put it, so out it came.

There seems to be a trend over the last two years or so that indicates it's now o.k. to like exploitation pictures. They have acquired a certain credibility... I wasn't aware that was true. I think it used to be more true before exploitation pictures turned into axe-murder pictures. When Roger was making exploitation pictures he'd get his name in the *Evergreen Review* and they would all talk about how clever he was. Sometimes people like exploitation pictures just for a perverse sort of reverse snobbery, so that they can lay claim to something of their own that nobody else has, like "discovering" Tobe Hooper or "discovering" John Carpenter, and they'll really latch onto this sort of thing so they can say, "See this guy, we found him, isn't he great?" And that tends to be a little more director oriented, than justly mainly exploitation.

But didn't you find that was the case when you were a film journalist yourself?

Oh yeah, I had my favourites. I liked Roger and Mario Bava and Michael Reeves and I liked these people's pictures and sometimes they'd make horrible pic-

picture about a sputnik right after Sputnik. "Ripped from Today's Devastating Headlines!" was what they used to say. Those movies, I thought, were always interesting and sometimes rather illuminating. But the formula now, which just seems to be, set up a lot of people and kill them off, was pioneered by Mario Bava in the 60s with *Twitch of the Death Nerve* and a whole bunch of things he did and were frankly, much better. There were no excuses presented. This was it. This was what it was about. How many different ways can we light it, how many different ways can we shoot it, how garish and stylised can we make it? *That isn't the point anymore*. The point is: "Let's bring in seven Sunguns and light it up good so we can see the gore!" It's quite probable that *Dawn of the Dead* should bear some of the blame for that, which is a picture that I personally don't think is as good as the original. People have said that it's wonderful because it's about shopping malls or consumer society. But any movie that runs 2 hours and 15 minutes and has to tell you twice that it's about consumer society is a picture that should be, at least, half an hour shorter.



the story would be, but you could put it in a movie. There are many ridiculous things. In *The Black Cat*, Bela Lugosi says to Boris Karloff, "There are many things under the sun!" And boy, that's true! It's a strange world out there. I just can't see, dealing particularly with people and making them believe something that's already unbelievable (which is basically what I have to do in a movie) without letting them know that even if it were true, it would be vaguely humorous that it was true at all. The idea of people turning into werewolves is terrifying if it happened to you, imagine if you had a date that night and suddenly your hands were all getting hairy! There is a comic side to it. And I think that if you don't find it, the audience will find it for you because audiences are not stupid and they are very wise to the absurdity of movie conventions. This is why many old movies are not successfully revived because people feel that the very sincerity that made them great movies in their time is now a little embarrassing and a little silly. Now I don't happen to personally feel that way. I get really vexed when some sentimental moment in a movie gets chafed at. But I can't blame them because society is different. When you think of how long ago that talking pictures started, was a long time ago and the people that made these pictures are no longer with us – a whole generation has just passed away and the whole way of looking at the world is different.

If you look at the difference in trailers today and trailers thirty years ago. Trailers, thirty years ago were so unsophisticated it's remarkable to me that the movies themselves could be as sophisticated as they were, because when they actually went down

to selling them, they'd just tell you how GREAT everything was; there were these big cards that would just throw words at you "YOU'LL LAUGH AND YOU'LL CRY!" and they made most of the movies look silly in the trailers. Today, they don't do that. Today, the trailers don't have the hyperbole they don't have the lights, they now have sophisticated advertising techniques like underselling with music and portentous narration – it's just different. People didn't think they were silly at the time, because that's the way things were sold on the radio. Fifties commercials hit you over the head, over and over with the name of the product and they'd just scream at you. It gives you a headache just to watch them and jingles that would just drive you nuts! It was like they grabbed you by the collar and they shook you! Now, you can't do that, because the material that you're selling is different and the people that you're selling it to are different.

I was going to make a picture of "The Philadelphia Experiment", which somebody else is now making. One of the basic problems we had was that the action took place in 1943 and we realised that the audience today is composed largely of people that weren't born in '43, a lot of them weren't born until 1963! And they didn't know exactly too much about World War 2 and it became a big commercial problem which is one of the reasons, I think, that movies are in such a strange spot right now. There are not a lot of "givens" about history anymore; the age of the audience today is such that fantasy themes seem to be the most popular because they don't require anything but the vaguest knowledge of what history was like.

When I saw Dawn of the Dead at the London Film Festival, I was told, "This is an important movie." If in that sense you mean exploitation pictures have better reputation, then yes. If you just want to grab somebody out of the pack and say, "Here, look at this guy's work. He's really saying something here." I wouldn't say he isn't saying something – of course he is but he isn't saying anything he didn't say better in his first picture, which was less of a big deal. *Dawn of the Dead* is almost a pretentious horror picture, which is a pretty difficult thing to pull off.

I think it's actually a boring film.

Well, I was never too thrilled with it. I think if it was eighty minutes, it would be a much better picture. The original picture is funny and scary and unique. I don't think anything he has done since has been quite like that.

Let's get back to your own work. Humour is something that's rampant in your pictures, do you think of yourself as a comedy director?

No. I think that if I did or I made the mistake of making a picture that was billed as comedy, that I would be in big trouble, because people will laugh at something that they don't expect whereas if they go in thinking, "You better make me laugh," they sit there and go, "Oh, this isn't very funny." If *Piranha* was advertised as a spoof of *Jaws*, which it sort of is, although there are moments of humour in the picture it's not exactly a laugh riot. It basically comes from an absurd world view. Reality, itself, is pretty funny at least in the sense that there seems to be no real logic in the way things happen. We try to impose logic on things and have explanations for things, but basically we can't tell whether a 200 pound safe is going to fall out of an airplane on us or not! Just to give you an example, take the *Cabbage Patch Dolls* – people fight over them in shops. Just recently, someplace in Milwaukee, two disc-jockeys said, that if people went to the stadium at 3 o'clock that a B52 was going to fly over and drop *Cabbage Patch Dolls* and people could get them. People should take their credit cards so that the infra-red camera could take pictures of the numbers on their cards! Two dozen people showed up with their cards, waiting for this plane to drop the dolls!

If that was in a movie, people would scream, "But that could never happen!"

That's true, but nonetheless, that's a scene that I think you could put in a movie. I can't imagine what

Above: Pam Grier and an amazonian acquaintance are reluctant guests at a wild Roman party in *The Arena*. Below: Joe Dante directs on the set of *Gremlins*, due from Warner Brothers in late 1984.





FIRE & ICE

THE name of Ralph Bakshi should be a familiar one to most readers of *Starburst*. Animator Bakshi made something of a reputation for himself in 1972 with release of his first animated theatrical feature *Fritz the Cat*, based on the successful series of underground cartoon strips by cult cartoonist Robert Crumb. From there, Bakshi began his long association with heroic fantasy. *Wizards* (1977) was the first movie in this vein, followed in 1978 by the first half of Bakshi's adaptation of the fantasy classic, *Lord of the Rings*.

Now the latest animated epic from the Bakshi studio is being readied for release on July 27th.

Fire and Ice is a slice of sword and sorcery, which teams Bakshi with cult fantasy artist Frank Frazetta. Frazetta rose to prominence during the early Seventies as the cover artist for the Lancer series of Conan paperbacks, and produced many of the better film posters of the last ten years.

But it was for Frazetta's expertise as a comic strip artist that Bakshi hired him. Frazetta had worked on the legendary E.C. comic books of the mid-Fifties and had illustrated much Edgar Rice Burroughs material during the Sixties. In Fantasy circles, Frazetta had become the fantasy artist for most fans of the genre.

Keeping faith with the idea of animated comic books, Bakshi hired Roy Thomas and Gerry Conway, who had made a name for themselves in the late Seventies as the top script writers at Marvel Comics, publishers of Spider-Man, The Hulk and this very magazine, to write the script.

Like Bakshi's previous efforts, *Fire and Ice* was shot first in live-action, with minimal sets and costumes, then enhanced by animators under the direction of Bakshi and Frazetta. The result, judging from the stills, perfectly captures the distinctive Frazetta "look".





SEE FIRE & ICE FREE

You can have your chance to see *Fire and Ice* before its opening date, courtesy of Thorn/EMI Classics and *Starburst* magazine.

All you have to do is clip the token below, and send it to the address below along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We have 300 pairs of tickets to give away to the first 300 *Starburst* readers who write in. (If your application is unsuccessful, we will hold your envelope for any future *Starburst* screenings).

Sorry, but this offer is limited to one pair of tickets per reader.

The screening will be at the Premier Cinema on London's Shaftesbury Avenue on Sunday, 8th July 1984. Doors open at 10.45 am and the film begins at 11.15. Unfortunately, no one can be admitted after the film begins. Get there early!

Send your applications to:
Starburst Fire and Ice Screening,
Marvel Comics Ltd,
23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA.



I think it must now be quite apparent to regular readers of *Starburst* that the space afforded this column has prevented any opportunity of publishing episode guides in any detail, and as TV companies seem to have little or in some cases, no knowledge of what they have in the way of fantasy material, there seems little point in promising to forecast what's to come.

However the BBC have announced the renewal of their contract with Paramount for screening *Star Trek*, Gene Roddenberry's highly successful sf series from the Sixties. It doesn't matter how many seasons of *T.J. Hooker*, William Shatner stars in, the whole

TV ZONE

by Richard Holliss



world only knows him as Captain James T. Kirk of the Starship Enterprise. Not that Shatner has tried to escape from this particular character, having revived it in two major film versions with a third, *The Search for Spock*, on the horizon.

Cult appreciation for *Star Trek* never wanes. Each year film conventions add more and more people to its ranks. It remains one of the most intelligently written of tv science fiction shows – to a point! In fact it goes without saying that the first series of *Star Trek* was unsurpassed for its quality as tv fantasy writing, but after that my own feelings tend to differ with that of the fans. The second series was adequate, but the third season descended into the banal. Of course you can find good in anything if you really want to, but to the more discerning sf fan who is not so easily taken in by the trappings of cultish paranoia, certain episodes are viewed as downright silly.

Perhaps then *Star Trek*'s success can be attributed to its arrival on US television at just the right time. With the exception of Irwin Allen's *Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea* and *Lost in Space*, mid-Sixties sf was very much geared to the audiences of the mid-evening fantasy/situation comedy series *Bewitched* (1964-72), *My Favorite Martian* (1963-66), *The Munsters* (1964-66), *The Addams Family* (1964-66), etc. Gene Roddenberry therefore, had a hard time convincing the networks that what was needed was a series with dramatic situations, strong characterisation and only a smattering of visual effects. In fact a style of programming absent from American TV since the anthology series of the late Fifties and early Sixties, *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits*.

A favourite story with Trekkies is (a) formid-

Above: *The famous shuttlecraft as it appeared in Star Trek episode Galileo Seven.* Below: *Captain Kirk, seen here firmly grasping his lippe, has to do battle with Science Officer Spock in the first story of the second Star Trek season, Amok Time*



able bunch at the best of times is how Roddenberry was turned down by CBS when he approached them with his first draft for *Star Trek*, because as the TV Executives told him, "We have one of our own that we like better." At that point the storytellers will look knowingly at each other and then all eyes to heaven while mumbling at how stupid CBS must have been. Only slight pressure will force them to reveal to you the identity of the "other" show, as if by then you hadn't already guessed.

This is always one very interesting aspect about *Star Trek* fandom. Instead of just accepting that their series is acknowledged by sf writers, critics and scientists everywhere as the best tv has to offer, they still fall into the trap of comparing it with shows that were aimed at a different market altogether. In this way they no doubt feel superior, happily ridiculing all other tv shows save their own. This is a sadly short-sighted attitude, and because of this they miss out on some equally appealing tv series. *Voyage, Bewitched* and *My Favorite Martian*, all ran longer on the network than *Star Trek* and there was certainly no debate in all these cases of a cancellation at the end of the second season. While it is true that Irwin Allen fizzled out as a tv producer of any merit at the close of the Sixties, Gene Roddenberry wasn't far behind. Where is his *Trek* follow-up *Questor*? And *Genesis II*?

Yet one American company was so sure that Gene could do no wrong, they even offered the first 5 scripts of *Genesis II* for sale. "Fan interest has prompted CBS to pick this sf series as a potential mid-season or fall 1974 addition to the network. Programme executives have stated that they see *Star Trek* possibilities," claimed the ad's headline. "This new tv series takes place on Earth of 2133 AD which has fragmented into 100 societies as strange and as exotic as 100 different planets... here is your opportunity to obtain the first 5 detailed story outlines... Professional writers, these are your guides for creating scripts for *Genesis II*." The Story titles available were *Company B*, *London Express*, *Robots Return*, *Poodle Shop*, and *The Apartment*.

The fact that the fans persuaded CBS to take up the show is a direct result of their pressure on NBC to keep *Star Trek* alive for a third season. What a pity the script writers weren't more faithful to their audience. Episodes such as *All Our Yesterdays*, and *Spectre of the Gun* and second season shows such as *A Piece of the Action*, and *Patterns of Force* were cliché ridden travesties. Unfortunately for Roddenberry, *Genesis II* was not picked up, neither was his other two shows, *Questor* (*Questor Tapes*, pilot only), and what could have been the most interesting of all, *Spectre*, of which its creator said, "Just as I felt once, I'd like to take a crack at science fiction, I've felt much the same way about the supernatural. *Spectre* is my attempt to bring the classic horror story to television." The characters of *Spectre* were William Sebastian, Doctor Hamm and Cyan (part man, part weretiger), "who travel the world battling vampires, man-made monsters, black magic, demons and worse, in a fight between Mankind and the 'others' who have been striving for thirty centuries to take over planet Earth."

And years later what do we find Gene doing? Yes, making *Star Trek* feature films. Roddenberry is, therefore, one of the few producers in film and television who appears to be typecast, not that I think he's at all worried about it, and the Trekkies must be absolutely delighted.

I'm dying to tell you the story of how Miss Money Penny (Lois Maxwell) almost got us arrested at Checkpoint Charlie while we were crossing into East Berlin during last weekend's German James Bond Festival but that must wait until another time. Space, and editor, permitting I'll be doing a longer report on the Festival in a future issue. It was a highly enjoyable occasion and gave me the opportunity of meeting, apart from Lois Maxwell, Peter Hunt (editor and second-unit director on the early Bonds and director of *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*), Guy Hamilton (director of *Goldfinger* and others), Syd Cain (art director on several Bonds), Christopher Wood (scriptwriter on *The Spy Who Loved Me* and, ugh, *Moonraker*) and Saskia Cohen Tanugi (she played Bond's helper in *Never Say Never Again*).

So keep tuned in to *Starburst* for all the juicy details...

VIDEO NASTIES IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS

At press time, the Video Recording Bill has had its second reading in the House of Commons and next goes to the Lords again where it is extremely unlikely it will meet any opposition. Indeed the level of the Lords' Debate on the previous occasion was even lower and more inane than the Commons one. For example Lord Lane, the Lord Chief Justice, said, among other things: "It seems horrifying that it was only when Scotland Yard put together some horror videos to show MPs in the Commons that voices started to be raised. Did it really require live cannibalism to make people realize what the horror videos were?"

To me it seems horrifying that the Lord Chief Justice can come out with such ridiculous waffle in the House of Lords and be taken seriously by his fellow Lords. Live cannibalism? What's he talking about? To the best of my knowledge the famous Scotland Yard collection of video clips didn't include any scenes from a "snuff" movie (and, of course, it's never been proven that a real snuff movie has ever existed). He's also wildly inaccurate when he says that it wasn't until the police showed their horror film to MPs that opposition to "video nasties" began. The campaign against the videos has been going on since the middle of 1982 if not earlier. The term "video nasty" had already been coined by the loonier elements of the tabloid press by then and videos such as *Driller Killer* were being seized by police and prosecuted under the Obscene Publications Act. The MPs didn't see their police-sponsored video nasty show until late in 1983. Lord Lane obviously hadn't bothered to get his facts right but, not surprisingly, no one corrected him on either point. The anti-video nasty juggernaut had too much momentum to

It's Only A MOVIE

A Film Column by John Brosnan



Our man Brosnan sits in on a 007 panel discussion at the German James Bond Festival. A full report on the event will appear in a future issue of *Starburst*.

allow such things as Truth to slow it down...

At long last some voices have been raised in the press against the Video Recordings Bill. *The Guardian* recently ran a series of articles about the implications of this new form of censorship, the best of which were the ones by solicitor Geoffrey Robertson and film critic Derek Malcolm. The latter made the following important point: "Film has always been more severely censored than any other medium of artistic expression here, largely because most of those who find it so dangerous do not regard it as 'artistic' in the first place and are almost entirely ignorant of the medium. But also because it appeals, unlike most of the other arts, to other than the comfortably upholstered middle classes. One of our chief censors once said to me: 'It is all very well for sophisticated, educated people like you to go to the ICA Cinema and see *Warhol's Trash*. But think of its effect on your average factory worker in Manchester...'"

And the British Videogram Association, which had previously supported Bright's Bill, now "totally opposes" it. The BVA general manager was quoted in the *Sunday Times* as saying: "...the powers in the bill are excessive. The censor is able to declare any film unsuitable for viewing in the home on any grounds - political, industrial, religious... Who knows what some future Home Secretary will decide to do?"

The Video Trade Association is also

against the Bill, as is the film and TV union, the ACTT. But all this opposition is, I'm afraid, too late. These people and organisations should have made their protests this time last year when Bright was preparing this odious piece of legislation. Now the MPs and their Lordships have made up their minds and only a few formalities remain before the Bill becomes law. The British Board of Film Censors is in the process of being greatly enlarged - acquiring new premises and more staff etc - in readiness for all the extra work. The chief censor, James Ferman, who has been conspicuously silent during the whole video controversy, is apparently very excited by his sudden elevation in importance. He's got films and now video under his control - what next? Television...? The world...?

If Mary Whitehouse had had her way television would definitely have been included in the Bill. She has said that the Home Office had "chickened out" of the challenge of extending the Bill to cover the whole of broadcasting. But the fear among BBC and ITV executives, as well as members of the ACTT, is that the government does have such a step in mind for the future. And as two of the new video censors will be appointed directly by the Home Secretary this all has very serious implications for the country as a whole. Instead of the self-censoring systems that now operate in the film and TV industries Bright's Bill has ushered in a system of direct government censorship. As I've said before in this column - 1984 has definitely arrived.

DINOSAUR NASTY

"She'll be after me next," muttered my old friend Harry Adam Knight morosely. He was referring to Mary Whitehouse. We were sitting in his regular drinking hole, the H2O Club (where the only drink they don't serve is water). Harry was plying me with drinks in order to get me to plug his latest horror novel *Carnosaur*. He is also, you may remember, the author of *Slimer*, which I mentioned back in *Starburst* 63, and which *The Times* newspaper described as a book of "appalling nastiness". I know this because *The Times* is quoted on the cover of *Carnosaur*, much to Harry's alarm.

The cover is actually rather impressive, and certainly much better than the one my publishers stuck on *The Midas Deep*. What is supposed to be a giant submersible moving through some deep underwater ravine looks instead like a juggernaut lorry travelling through a Welsh valley at dawn. But enough about my book; back to Harry's: *Carnosaur* is a racy read about a crazy English aristocrat who genetically recreates dinosaurs from fossilised cells in order to stock his private zoo with the rarest of all animals. But then his even crazier wife starts letting them out and very soon the residents of Cambridgeshire start encountering some pretty ghastly things at the bottom of their gardens, and elsewhere...



Harry's dinosaurs are very nasty indeed and may offend dinosaur-lovers by the score (there is a surprising number of dinosaur fans around these days - have you noticed?) but Harry insists it's all scientifically accurate. "Science will one day be able to recreate extinct animals by genetic engineering," he told me seriously, shortly before he fell off his bar stool. But will science ever be able to recreate Harry's liver?

So go buy *Carnosaur* which is published by Star Paperbacks in June.

And after that, Harry, I think you owe me another drink.

HAMMER HOUSE OF MYSTERY & SUSPENSE...



An interview with the head of Hammer, Roy Skeggs, by Alan Jones.

By the time you read this, three of the feature length television movies made under the overall title of the *Hammer House of Mystery and Suspense* should have been aired on ITV in a Thursday 8 o'clock time slot. The thirteen part series started shooting on October 31st last year with directors John Hough and Peter Sasdy working back to back alternately on the first six. Each 90 minute feature is a separate entity unto itself and at the time of writing seven have been completed or are in pre-production although the order in which they were made might not necessarily be the transmission one. Each story was selected to highlight mystery and suspense, as the title says, more than the usual brand of Hammer horror on the insistence of 20th Century-Fox, the backers of the series.

And the stories so far are:

Czech Mate starring Susan George and Patrick Mower about an intricate undercover plot devised by British Intelligence to use the lives and emotions of ordinary people to achieve their aims.

Sweet Scent of Death starring Shirley Knight and Dean Stockwell where a delivery of roses and threats by a mysterious stranger unlocks a hidden secret in the memory of an attorney living in the English countryside.

The Late Nancy Irving starring Cristina Raines and Simon Williams concerning itself with a hi-tech Dracula tale.

A Distant Scream starring David Carradine and Stephanie Beacham with Carradine playing a dual role.

In Possession starring Carol Lynley and Christopher Cazenove about the course of eerie events in a London flat supposedly haunted by the past although the paranormal happenings turn out to be much more complex than that.

Black Carrion starring Season Hubley and Leigh Lawson in which a pop impresario hires a journalist to solve the mystery of the abrupt disappearance of a chart topping duo of the early '60s.

And finally, *The Last Video and Testament* starring Deborah Raffin and David Langton.

Roy Skeggs, of course, now owns Hammer Films with his partner Brian Lawrence. He started in the film industry as an accountant and joined Hammer in 1963 where he worked his way up to the position of the Company's Financial Controller and eventually became Production Supervisor on some of the more memorable Hammer horrors. He produced his



first film for the company in 1972, *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell*, and followed it with *To the Devil – A Daughter*. In 1980 came the 26 episode television series *The Hammer House of Horror* but financier ITC's now well documented monetary problems dashed all chance of a second series.

Hammer Films is now based at Elstree Studios above Stage 2 and it's here that I finally managed to squeeze myself into Roy Skeggs hectic schedule for this short interview.

STARBURST Are any of the scripts you are using leftovers from the proposed second series of *The Hammer House of Horror*?

Roy Skeggs :None. Remember those stories only lasted an hour and you just can't extend that to 90 minutes. If we had had to have filled them out we would have lost the quality. Which is exactly what happened after I tried it with a couple of them. So we dumped the lot and started afresh.

Why are the episodes 90 minutes in length?

Because 20th Century-Fox who are financing the series for worldwide distribution except for the U.K. wanted that length. I tried to persuade them to keep the hour long format but when they met with their vast network of global salesmen they all agreed that a feature length slot was only right for the Hammer name.

Is the Fox connection due solely to *Journey to the Unknown* which Hammer made for them in the '60s?

No. It was because they wanted Hammer product and our reputation guaranteed them quality. They insisted we had no horror because of their intended primetime viewing slot so mystery and suspense became the only logical answer. We had to give them all the Hammer content minus the blood and gore.

How did you go about finding the scripts for this series?

The same way we did for the previous one. We let everybody and their literary agents know we were on the look-out for good strong scripts with a twist in the tale. In all we had about 240 submissions of 4-6 page synopses. Anything we liked, we developed. It's mainly big names again so we have precious few new writers on the series. Brian Clemens has written two for us, so has Dennis Spooner. Michael J Bird did one of the *Journey to the Unknown* stories years ago. Ingrid Pitt submitted several ideas but she's not really a writer. One I liked very much but I couldn't get Fox to accept it. I think Ingrid is incredible, actually, she only did two films for us but she's always talking about them at conventions and things. She's almost a one-woman Hammer industry. I love her dearly and would loved to have given her a part in one of the episodes but there really wasn't one for her. Perhaps in the next series though.

It is nice to know you are using the old-school Hammer directors like Hough and Sasy.

Right down to the technicians, I've been trying to reassemble the Hammer crews but unfortunately we are all getting older! We also have Val Guest, Alan Gibson, Tom Clegg and Gabrielle Beaumont who directed *The Godsend* and some episodes of *Dynasty*. Christopher Lee was going to appear in one story but the dates we needed him for clashed with something else. And like Ingrid there was nothing here for Peter Cushing either. In *The Hammer House of Horror* series the only one Peter could have done was the one he did. He hated doing it but he did it for Hammer and I really respected him for that.

What did you base your choice of scripts on?

The overall story – not just the twist end. Would it

hold without a lull for 1½ hours was my main concern. It is going to be nothing like *Tales of the Unexpected* where you could tell what was going to happen after the first two minutes. After a promising start that series turned out to be rubbish. We have just finished filming *In Possession* which is about a reverse haunting from the future. I've just seen the first cut without music or effects and although I say it myself, it really is excellent. We only have three episodes that deal with special effects because they just had to be affordable one. An upcoming episode, *The Haunted Tennis Court*, has the most effects in it which actually makes a change for Hammer because that is where our money went in the early days. But then I wanted the series to be totally different to anything we've ever done before. It's a good mixed bag I must say.

What are you really trying to aim at in the series though?

Psychological drama I suppose, for want of a better category, although we are making three ghost stories. I want the audience to stay glued to their television sets to the last reel of each film and I think we've succeeded. It is as near Hammer as possible

without going all the way. You can tell they are Hammer films from the word "go". What more can I add, apart from the fact that Fox are delighted with them so far?

How did you choose the stars for each episode?

We are committed to one American television name per episode. Season Hubley for example I'd only heard of vaguely but she is an enormous star in the States. She was actually superb, whereas one of our other stars, Carol Lynley, was only adequate to be honest. David Carradine was really good too.

How far ahead is each episode planned?

(Amid gales of laughter) I'll answer that by merely saying that we had two days to cast our current leading lady and luckily she said yes otherwise we would have been in trouble! You can't work too far in advance because logistically it would be a nightmare. We are always trying to work on the basis of delivering one episode, having two in pre-production and two to cast. But then you get a week like this one where we have two shooting on location at the same time. It's certainly a long day but we cope and as well organised as I think we are, you honestly can't work too far in advance. ►





Above: Susan George as she appears in *Czech Mate*, a story from the Hammer House of Mystery and Suspense. Far right: Bernard Kay attempts to drown Vivienne Burgess in this scene from a story entitled *In Possession*.

The pressure for you is obviously very great but have you had any major problems to deal with? Well, the current leading lady has her husband with her who is her manager and a producer in his own right to boot. So we have had a lot of ammunition firing going on – but there's always somebody isn't there? Otherwise no problems really.

How much is the series costing?

Less than 4 million for the entire series, which isn't bad for these days. We're nearly halfway through our schedule and we are holding well which is marvellous when you consider we are talking about nearly 20 hours of television. Fox had worked out that it would probably cost them 2-3 million dollars per show so you can appreciate the miracles we are working. It's quite incredible really. We have a 13 day turnaround and if any director goes over that time, it's taken away from them and put in the hands of a second unit. We have only built one set on the stage here so far; otherwise it is all location work. Sometimes I'm convinced I'm a masochist! But with our budgetary limitations and the cost of construction these days, it is far easier to do everything on location and go a country estate where everything is already built. It gives the films production value without spending a penny.

Have'n't Hammer missed out somewhat on the burgeoning horror trend of the past five years?

Horror has taken on a new connotation these days. Hammer films to me were like Walt Disney with blood and you certainly can't say that about the more recent efforts in the genre. I don't think we missed out at all – and remember Michael Carreras didn't really want to know after he involved himself in big productions like *The Lady Vanishes*. Hammer made horror films well. Their reputation is still second to none. You should see the mail we still get from all over the world even though there has been

SUMMER MADNESS!

In this year's Doctor Who Summer Special we cover the crazy world of Doctor Who merchandise, featuring books, records, fanzines, toys and much, much more! Plus a report on the massive Chicago Convention, an exclusive Doctor Who interview, exciting features and full-colour pin-ups.

**The Doctor Who
Summer Special
ON SALE NOW!**





such a long break between productions. But this series will be everything the fans are expecting, I'm sure of it. At the moment we are discussing a package of six feature films with a major studio - although they aren't all horror films I hasten to add. But Fox have an option on 39 of these episodes, so that's the next two years written off for a start. When the time is right, we will go into production. Hammer is definitely looking forward no back.

Is one of these proposed features a new Dracula as has been rumoured?

All I can say on that score is that we have a script with an American agent at the moment who like it a lot. It is based on Vlad the Impaler and is called *Dracula - The Beginning*.

Something we constantly keep being asked at Starburst is why have none of the really famous early Hammer horrors become available on video yet?

Well, all the rights are with people like Warner Brothers - who have 30 of our titles - but they are just so lazy. With their own titles they earn 100% of the profits - with ours, of course, it would only be 50%. So obviously they will deal with their own back catalogue first. Columbia have just put out *The Curse of the Mummy's Tomb* and *The Gorgon* and we received a very good return. *The Hound of the Baskervilles* has just made a fortune for us, and Universal, on video too. So, slowly but surely,

everything will come out. I do chase them all the time.

On the whole though have you liked working on the Hammer House of Mystery and Suspense?

Not really, to be perfectly frank. It used to be good fun but it isn't so much on this. It's slowly getting better, though. The first two months were horrendous, with mini-disasters happening all the time like trying to match shots on location when it had snowed over night for example. I'm settling down to almost being my old self again. I watched Barbra Streisand on television the other night talking about *Yentl* and it seems we shared the same symptoms. But if you care, you get like this and let's face it, I have set myself a high target on anybody's terms!



"holy ridiculous costume, batman..!"



**By PETE SCOTT in issue 15 of
MIGHTY WORLD OF MARVEL
On sale NOW!**

10 TWILIGHT ZONE VIDEOS TO BE WON

The Twilight Zone, the science fiction film which brought together the directorial might of Steven Spielberg, John Landis, George Miller and Joe Dante, is now available on Warner Home Video. Drawing from Rod Serling's classic television show *The Twilight Zone* presents four breathtaking excursions into the supernatural and the explicable. The film creates another dimension of entertainment. A dimension, not only of sight and sound, but of mind. The four

stories embrace every emotion from the sinister to the sentimental, not forgetting a healthy helping of terror. It is a journey into a wondrous land whose boundaries are that of the imagination.

Next stop, the *Twilight Zone* Video Competition!

Starburst magazine, in association with Warner Home Video, is offering you, the lucky reader, the chance to win one of ten copies of *The Twilight Zone* in this exciting, easy-to-enter competition.

Just answer the questions below on a postcard, attaching the entry stamp, and submit them to us at:

Twilight Zone Video Competition,
Starburst Magazine,
23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA.

Enclose with your entry your own name and address and desired video format. You are about to enter . . . *The Twilight Zone* Video competition.

QUESTIONS

1. In the opening sequence of *The Twilight Zone* we see two young men travelling in a car. One of the young men is Dan Aykroyd. Which recent hit film did he star in?

- a) *Bugs Business*
- b) *Trading Places*
- c) *Zelig*

2. In the second segment, directed by Steven Spielberg, we see Scatman Crothers starring as Mr Bloom, a man who brings new life to an old age home. Which famous cartoon character did Scatman Crothers provide the voice for?

- a) *Bugs Bunny*
- b) *Scooby Doo*
- c) *Hong Kong Fuy*

3. Star of segment 4, about a paranoid airline traveller, is John Lithgow. For which film was he recently nominated as best supporting actor in the Oscars?

- a) *Tender Mercies*
- b) *The Right Stuff*
- c) *Terms of Endearment*

RULES

The competition is open to all readers of *Starburst* except employees of Marvel Comics Ltd, and Warner Home video. You may enter as many times as you wish provided each entry is accompanied by an entry stamp. All entries must be on postcards. All entries not on postcards and/or not bearing entry stamps will be disqualified. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into.



**TWILIGHT ZONE
1 TOKEN**

10

NEVER SAY NEVER AGAIN VIDEOS TO BE WON

Another big film just released onto Warner Home Video is the thrilling action-adventure film *Never Say Never Again*, in which Sean Connery returns as James Bond, 007, the agent with a license to kill. This new Bond film has our intrepid hero once again up against the evil SPECTRE organisation who are intent on world domination through nuclear terrorism. As with previous Bond films there is no shortage of thrilling stunts, special effects, high-speed action, and beautiful women in the shape of Barbara Carrera and Kim Basinger.

And now, we at Starburst, never ones to say "never again" to a free competition, have ten copies of this exciting video to give away, courtesy of Warner Home Video. Again all you have to do is answer the questions below and send them on a postcard together with your name, address and preferred format to:

Never Say Never Again Video Competition,
Starburst Magazine,
Marvel Comics Ltd,
23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA.
Don't forget to attach the entry stamp on this page to your entry.

QUESTIONS

- What was the last film starring Sean Connery prior to *Never Say Never Again*?
a) *Diamonds Are Forever*
b) *You Only Live Twice*
c) *Live and Let Die*
- Which top British comedian makes a guest appearance in *Never Say Never Again*? as a British Embassy official?
a) Mel Smith
b) Freddie Starr
c) Rowan Atkinson
- In which one of the following films did Sean Connery appear?
a) *Time Bandits*
b) *Our Man Flint*
c) *Eye of the Needle*

RULES

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provided each entry is accompanied by an entry stamp. All entries must be on postcards. All entries not on postcards and/or not bearing entry stamps will be disqualified. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into.



Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

Hold the Ice!

Superman producer Pierre Spengler has either been reading in this column how many films have Ice in their titles ... or he's been studying the critical attacks on MGM's *Ice Pirates* (check out Alan Jones' favourable review on page 40, this issue - Editor) fantasy offering. Either way, he's dropped his *Ice People* idea. The title, that is. Not his plans to film Rene Barjavel's book. He'll call it *Out of Time*, instead. Jeremy Paul Kagan will direct the sf drama next year - inside the legendary Mosfilm studios in Moscow, no less. And if all of Spengler's plans dovetail, the rest of the movie - about an entire civilisation being unfrozen after two billion years due to a nuclear strike - will be shot on various Russian locations, from Kiev to Baku.

Super Couple

Also breaking away from the Supie films - but not from the Salikins until after *Santa Claus* - are the screenwriters, David and Leslie Newman. They're sticking to fantasy, though. David has scripted *Sheena, Queen of the Jungle* - and his wife, Leslie, is completing her Universal assignment on *The Shadow*. Then David hopes to turn director again for *Letters To Michael*, more fantastic than fantasy. It's based on the true New York story about a man advertising for a wife and getting 8,000 replies in a year and then, well, market-researching them ... Sounds like a job for Superman!

Jaws Bites... Beds

Real life monster man Richard Kiel is safely back home after causing his usual headaches for hotel chiefs in Hong Kong ... and Paris. Kiel, of course, is the Jaws character from the Bond films. These days he makes more movies abroad, due to his *Spy Who Loved Me/Moonraker* fame, than he does in America. And hoteliers just wish he wouldn't. Or at least that he'd bring his own bed or sleeping bags with him. There's not many beds around to house Richard when he decides to lay his gargantuan 7ft 2ins down to sleep.

His latest travels have been for the third *Aces Go Places* comedy adventure. These films are rather like 007 Meets The Keystone Kops, very parochial Far East romps stuffed to the gills with all kinds of stunts. I mentioned the first of them in a 1982 Cannes festival report - because of its engaging battle



Robert Ulrich as Jason and Mary Crosby as Princess Karina in *The Ice Pirates*, just one of a current glut of fantasy films with Ice in the title.

Camera...!

What happened on Friday, April 13, all over America ...? You've got it in one. Or four ... *Friday The 13th - The Final Chapter* opened for business. With the hype line: The body count continues ... Wes Craven started *Nightmare On Elm Street* on May 1 ... Due this way soon a Ste-hen King book that Steve didn't write. Tom Underwood and Chuck Miller examine the King's work in *Fear Itself - The Horror Fiction of Stephen King* ... And King's latest movie queen, ex-tv actress Linda Hamilton, has moved on from the successful *Chil-*

dren of the Corn film to Arnold Schwarzenegger's side in *The Terminator*. Their director is British: Michael Cameron ... Back on American tv, all 152 hours of late Vic Morrow's *Combat* series, circa 1962-66. Vic directed quite a few of these World War II sagas, himself. So who gets his residuals, I wonder ... And apparently due back on worldwide tv, 26 new *Avengers* tales starring Patrick MacNee and Diana Rigg. That's the rumour anyway. I have not got this story confirmed as yet ... Another hot rumour: *Alien II* will be made for 1985 ...



Linda Hamilton, pictured here being held captive by an enraged Courtney Gains in *Children of the Corn*, is to co-star with Arnold Schwarzenegger in *The Terminator*.

between model cars! Only ET beat the sequel in Hong Kong last year!

This time, Hong Kong's King Kong hero, Sam Hui - a kind of good jewel thief - tackles not only the massive Kiel as Big G, but the former *Mission Impossible* chief, Peter Graves, a Bond lookalike (almost) in Jean Mersan and - good lord - even our own dear Queen gets a look in. She's played by the clone of Madge of Buck House, a lady called Huguette Funrock (who's kidding!). Huguette makes a huguette mint out of her House of Windsor looks. She even played the regal role in a farce with Mickey Rooney once.

Main stunt for the third film - an instant hit with the Hong Kongians who are beginning to think King Kong could stop the Red Chinese taking over the joint in 1997 - is a *Superman II* style fight atop the Eiffel Tower. Yes, yes, the real one, not Richard Kiel. Hero Hui is knocked off it by Kiel ... and calmly parachutes down into the river Seine below. And that, let me tell you, requires a helluva lot of nerve. And ... drift. The scene is not immediately below the tower, it's well beyond the busy Quai Branly thoroughfare, quite a bit to the east, or, right ... depending which way the garlic wind's blowing.

Second Bite

If at first you don't succeed ... *Jaws 3-D* cohorts Lou Gossett and Dennis Quaid are back in harness for *Enemy Mine*, an sf drama being shot in Iceland and Hungary. Richard Loncraine started directing the Edward Khmara script in Iceland on April 16, and is due to complete all interiors in Budapest studios. The film will be released by 20th Century-Fox, no stranger to sf since *Star Wars* and the *Planet of the Apes* films. Why then, does the Fox production chief Joe Wizan, refer to *Enemy Mine* as "sci-fi with a strong humanistic side." "Sci-fi", Joe - what planet are you living on?

Com-pulsive corner

As I've probably mentioned before, this is the year that West Germany vaults into the fantasy act. There's *The Never Ending Story*, of course; *Momo*; Brian Johnson's new movie; *The Noah Ark's Principle* - and now veteran West German director Rolf Thiele has arranged a 50-50 backing deal with a Hollywood combine for his script, *Pulse*. Shooting starts in Munich this summer, with all the SFFX being carried out in London. Naturally.

But don't muddle *Pulse* with *Impulse* - that's the latest from *Omen 3* director Graham Baker. It's an American movie, produced by Tim Zinnermann, and co-starring Tim Matheson and *Psycho II*'s Meg Tilly.

Spaced Out

When she was eight, Pia Zadora made her first movie - *Santa Claus Conquers*

The Martians. (Oh, I do hope the Salkinds aren't reading this...) It must have made an impression on her. 'Cos Pia's into what she calls science fiction anew. This time it's *Voyage of the Rock Aliens*, designed by James Fargo, one-time Clint Eastwood's action director, as a spoof 50s sf and rock 'n' roll B films. "It's the spaciest comedy ever launched," trills Pia. Or as the hype puts it: Will Dee Dee (that's Pia) and Frankie save the world from death and destruction and still sing at the dance Saturday night? Will Dee Dee and the Alien have a close encounter? Will Chainsaw let Diane fix his tool?

No answer to that, is there? Well, not unless you're Mel Brooks...

Planet Brooks

It's always difficult to know when Mel Brooks is being serious. But during his Euro-trek for his new movie *To Be or Not To Be*, Mel said his next force will be a kind of *Blazing Rockets*. His title? *Planet Moron*.

He'll have to hurry as so many spacey send-ups are in the works just now. Mel is, of course, one step ahead of the rest. He can already make use of his *Jews In Space* jape at the end of *History of the World - Part One*. Remember, the spacecraft shaped like a Star of David and the singalongaMel song about "We're jews out in space, zooming around protecting the Hebrew race..."

Bad taste? "There's NOT ENOUGH BAD TASTE," screamed Mel in capital letters. "I LOVE bad taste! I LIVE for bad taste! I am the SPOKESMAN for bad taste! There's no such thing... A lot of the people who denounce bad taste are hypocrites. Because when the lights are out, WHEN THE SHADES ARE DOWN - woo! woo! woo! - they're doing things they don't talk about. We know. Because we do them, too!"

Look out... er, up!

Lynn Holly-Johnson, the Bond girl who was so young she made Roger Moore look like Roger Morigue in *For Your Eyes Only*, has joined the science fiction genre. She's been in Deran Sarafian's movie about a NASA space lab dropping to Earth rather like David Bowie did in 1976. *The Falling*, it's called. Dennis Christopher, the movie buff of all time in *Fade To Black*, is Lynn's partner (of the right age this once) and James Cummins is handling all the make-up effects.

Supie IV?

The Salkinds must be running out of ideas of how to spend other peoples' millions. I hear they're talking about *Superman IV* as if the other three haven't lost enough money. Chris Reeve, last I heard of him, was just running...

If they have to replace Chris, the



Top: Dennis Christopher, pictured here in a scene from *Fade to Black*, is to appear with ex-Bond girl Lynn Holly-Johnson in a science fiction film called *The Falling*. Above: If the Salkinds decide to make *Superman IV* it is unlikely Christopher Reeve (posing here as *the Men of Steel*) will return in the title role, so perhaps Alexander Salkind will reconsider his original choice for the part (see *Super Story*).

choice shouldn't be left to Alexander Salkind, that's for sure. Supie-scribe David Newman says the films were not Alex's idea but his son, Ilya's. "To this day," swears Newman, "I'm not sure Alex knows who Superman is. He always refers to him as Mr. Superman."

Super Story

That ain't all...

Back in the days when the first *Super-film* was just a script for searching for a young Burt Reynolds, when Brandon was about to sign and Dustin Hoffman was being considered as Lex Luthor, the film team - the Salkinds, the Newmans (David and his co-writer wife, Leslie) and the first choice as director, Guy Hamilton, had a Cannes meeting with Hoffman's Euro-rep, Sir Jarvis Astaire. The conversation turned to Muhammad Ali's fame and fortune due to Astaire's connection with both via his closed-circuit boxing telecasts, and well, this is how Newman says the rest of the chat went down...

Alex: Who is this Mr. Ali who's making so much money?

Astaire: Muhammad Ali, Alex - he's the heavyweight champion of the world. He's the most famous man in the world!

Alex: I've never heard of this Mr. Ali.

Ilya: Dad, he was on the cover of *Time*!

Alex: Why couldn't he play Superman?

& Akk-shun...!

Long-time-no-see Jason Williams - 1972's *Flesh Gordon* - is back in Bill Osco country for *The Cheerleaders' Wild Weekend*. Yeah, that sounds like Bill at work... A brand new American cine-concern has unshelved an oldish-horror flick called *Pranks to release it as The Dorm That Dripped Blood*. Figures; new outfit, you see, is called New Image... Joseph Cotton manages without it. His 1980 horror, *Delusion*, directed by Alan Beattie, is another shell-toppler now being peddled as *The House Where Death Lives*... Robert Ginty is *The Executioner* for David Winters, the man who gave us *The Last Horror Film* (which most of us gave right back), while James Glickenhaus, the director who started Ginty rolling as *The Exterminator* (1980), carries on without him for his fantasy trip, *Road of the Dungeonmaster*... Jim's next is *Totally Gross*, which sounds more like a David Winters movie, wouldn't you say?... Paul Bartel's Raoul, aka Robert Beltrane, lives again in *Night of the Comet*, with Mrs Bland, herself: Mary Woronov... Final big unconfirmed rumour: *Star Wars 4* starts shooting, in Hollywood not London, in September this year. The word is that Spielberg directs and Linda Ronstadt stars. Believe it when you see it!

Starburst Review Section

SPLASH

"It has a sweetness of spirit that is irresistible."

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

You won't see a funnier, more poignant or more romantic fantasy adventure film this year than *Splash*. It's not only a revelation from Disney's new label Touchstone, as it emerges as their best all-round entertainment for years, but it is a visual, briskly paced *tour de force* from 30-year-old Ron Howard – incredibly, his first genre picture.

Splash pits a fabled creature – the mermaid – against life in the Big Apple and the result is a pure delight. When Daryl Hannah falls in love with a wholesale produce marketeer, it comes at the right moment for Tom Hanks whose personal life is in tatters. Hanks has never been the same since he was saved by a mermaid off the coast of Cape Cod at the age of eight. Since then no girl has ever measured up to that fleeting submarine moment. So, 20 years later, he sets off to those same shores and coincidentally gets saved by the same mermaid all over again. She in turn follows him home to return his lost wallet and ends up being arrested by the Statue of Liberty for indecent exposure until Hanks takes her to his apartment. As she has legs out of the water, so long as she is dry her secret is safe, but every now and again she has to repair to the bathroom clutching a packet of salt to douse her tail fin. Will Hanks still love her when he learns the awful truth? Or will the creepy mad scientist Eugene Levy reveal all in the name of medical science when he stumbles on her fishy scent?

Splash sounds very whimsical – and it is – but this often dubious quality is solidly rooted here in hip humour and warm pathos, so it works beautifully. Whether it be Daryl Hannah's attempts at pronouncing her name in the television department of Bloomingdales, or funny man John Candy's letter to *Penthouse* magazine, *Splash* has a sweetness of spirit that is irresistible.

There's poetry here, believe it or not, and grace too, perfectly highlighted by the remarkably gifted cast. Tom Hanks' character really does come into its own towards the climactic final decision that changes his life. Up till then his performance is a perfect blend of mischief and wide-eyed wonderment. As his brother, John Candy is the only screen slob since John Belushi who is



easy to take. He's very much an unknown quantity in this country but I've a feeling *Splash* will change all that. But *Splash*'s trump card is the superb Daryl Hannah who you will remember as Pris the replicant from *Blade Runner*. She invests Madison (after Avenue) the mermaid with such appealing innocence and childish delight in all things *terra firma* that it is hard not to instantly fall in love with her the moment her image flickers across the screen.

I fell hook, line and sinker for *Splash*. It's one of that rare breed of movies that you take a friend to see who turns to you after the closing credits and says, "Wasn't that fantastic?" I can't give the film higher praise than that.

Starring: Daryl Hannah (Madison), Tom Hanks (Alan Bauer), John Candy (Freddie Bauer), Eugene Levy (Walter Kornbluth).

Directed by Ron Howard. *Screenplay by* Lowell Ganz & Babaloo Mandel and Bruce Jay, *from a story by* Bruce Jay Friedman. *Produced by* Brian Grazer, *Executive producer* John Thomas Lenox.



HEARTS OF ARMOUR

"The best film to come out of Italy in a long while."

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

Hearts of Armour is the best film to come out of Italy in a long while. It doesn't conform to any trend that is particularly hot now, so it's doubly a surprise. It blends themes from *Romeo and Juliet* and other Gothique romances and plants them firmly against the backdrop of the Crusades with not just one, but two sets of star-crossed lovers battling it out between the Moors and the Christians. The sketchy story though is incidental as Giacomo Battiato's film is more a feast for the eyes – a gory magical mystery tour through stunning locations and panoramic vistas.



The epic sweep of *Hearts of Armour* is quite an achievement considering the low budget. It has an economical *Excalibur* look in its production design and art direction and uses gimmicks like clanking armour filmed in slow-motion to give a balletic feel. Unusual shots filmed through visors go a long way in grabbing the attention too. Tanya Roberts reveals even more here than she did in *The Beastmaster* – her rape by an invisible man is quite extraordinary – and makes the outlook for *Sheena Queen of the Jungle* very hopeful indeed.

Hearts of Armour's theatrical release is in question in this country at the moment. I hope it isn't diverted straight to video as that would dwarf the imaginative scale of Battiato's vision and the superb score by Cooper and Hughes

Starring, Zeudi Araya, Barbara De Rossi, Rick Edwards, Ron Moss, Maurizio Nichetti, Tanya Roberts, Giovanni Visentin, Tony Vogel.

Written and directed by Giacomo Battiato, Produced by Nicola Garrano.

OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN

"Wrings every ounce of terror and suspense from such a simple premise."

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

When is a horror movie not a horror movie? When it classifies as a tangibly real allegorical urban nightmare – that's when. Such a film is George Pan Cosmatos' *Of Unknown Origin* which uses a genre sensibility and shock tactics to carry its basic undefinable theme.

This Canadian gem, from one of the producers responsible for David Cronenberg's meteoric rise to success, outlines the psychological breakdown of a high-powered business executive which manifests itself in the form of a

larger than life rat. Bart Hughes packs off his wife and son for a two-week holiday and finds himself fighting for his sanity in a battle of wits with the vicious female rodent when it moves into his Manhattan brownstone.

Cosmatos wrings every ounce of terror and suspense from such a simple premise by mainly giving us the horrendous facts concerning the very real threat rats are to our society. The result is edge of the seat tension whenever a claw or a whisker is, so rightly, subliminally glimpsed. And when we are offered such nerve-racking dream sequences regarding the misuse of rat poison and that universal phobia of vermin in foodstuffs, it is hard not to react with any other emotion than revulsion.

Actually, rats really are of unknown origin and the strength of Cosmatos' movie comes from milking our very woolly understanding of such an alien species. Mix *Willard* with the last episode of *Creepshow* and – with a vengeance – you'll come up with *Of Unknown Origin*. It is the best argument I've seen in ages for the non-gore approach to this type of film.

ICE PIRATES

"Has too much going for it for anyone not to enjoy themselves."

A Standard Film Review
by Alan Jones

Although nothing more than an Errol Flynn-type swashbuckler set in outer space, *Ice Pirates* is silly, crude, inventive fun that is good-natured and off-the-wall enough to produce a rollicking good time.

The story is slight – an intergalactic pirate played by Robert Urich attacks spaceships for their precious booty of water, the luxury commodity of some distant universe. On one raid he gets captured and falls in love with Mary Crosby's Princess Karina and together they escape to search for her father who discovered a mysterious seventh planet flooded with water. No prizes for guessing where that turns out to be!

Ice Pirates provides ultra-hip sexual innuendos and smart alec remarks every 30 seconds or so. Add this to the

wonderful art direction and an extremely clever time-warp sequence – where Crosby literally conceives, gives birth to and rears a young Urich in about five minutes flat – and I'm not ashamed to admit that I laughed like a drain.

Whether it be aliens caught with their trousers down in the latrines, a mischievous space herpie that escapes on board the ship or the robot pimp offering mechanical ladies of the night, *Ice Pirates* is admittedly sometimes pretty stupid. But it is also witty and intelligent thanks to director Stewart Raffill's additions to Stanford (Krull) Sherman's script. The castration machine is worth the price of admission alone and while the steam-driven robots often come close to stealing the film from the mostly tv actor cast, *Ice Pirates* has too much going for it for anyone not to enjoy themselves.

Starring: Robert Urich (as Jason), Mary Crosby (Princess Karina), Robert Symonds (Lanky).

Directed by Stewart Raffill, Screenplay by Stewart Raffill and Stanford Sherman, Production Associate Eric Johnson, Produced by John Foreman.



We've received many letters from *Starburst* readers bemoaning the fact that, with the gathering momentum of the Video Nasties Bill, even British Board of Film Censor passed movies such as *Star Trek 2* and *Halloween 3* are being further cut before being released on video. Regular video columnist Barry Forshaw has been investigating life on the other side of the fence, speaking to video distributors and tracking down what's been cut and what hasn't.

THE SCYTHE OF CENSORSHIP

It would be very pleasant to breeze through this column without a mention of that disheartening topic, censorship – but as the Video industry continues to be the convenient scapegoat for most of society's ills (much as horror and crime comic books served the same function in the 50s), there's just no avoiding a monthly update on the latest in the campaign to drag Britain back to the comforts of Victorian morality. Still, we should all take heart from the fact that this Sceptred Isle will soon return to an age of crime-free, morally impeccable innocence such as the Victorians enjoyed. (Haven't the advocates of Victorian morality read Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*?)

Of all the lunatic situations proliferating at the moment the silliest must surely be the random seizure of titles chosen by none-to-perceptive bobbies (such as Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* and Fuller's *The Big Red One* – because their titles suggested horror and sex respectively!). There's also (and far more worrying!) the blithe ignoring of B.B.F.C. "X" certificates in the prosecution of such titles as *The Evil Dead*, all copies of which have now been appropriated under Section 2 of the Obscene Publications Act.

Paul Webster of Palace Video (who distribute Raimi's inventive and clever shocker, as well as acclaimed art films such as *Diva* and *Fitzcarraldo*) tells me that they are "waiting to be arrested" – the police have not yet taken action, despite the seizure of the titles.

Certainly, it's encouraging to hear that Palace are fighting this absurd action, as well as defending individual dealer prosecutions. Many dealers, rather than risking incurring legal costs, have pleaded guilty: a virtual *carte blanche* for our over-zealous guardians to prosecute any and every title in the horror genre (or "nasty" genre, as they have it). And the estimable Palace are to be much applauded for their "Anti-Censorship" showing of banned films (on video) at London's Scala – their courage is an example to all advocates of free speech and expression. It's just a shame that their gesture (along with the words of the McKenzies, Brosnans, Joneses et al in this magazine) will be steamrollered by

Video FILE

Tape Reviews by Barry Forshaw



A gripping scene from Dario Argento's *Suspiria*, a film soon to be recalled by Thorn EMI Video to be cut to comply with their policy of issuing only B.B.F.C. certificated theatrical versions.

TRUST OUR JUDGEMENT!



video file video-phile
barry forshaw risks fast-
forward-finger and
pan-scan-eyestrain to
separate the
crowd-pleasers from the
crowd fleecers.



HITS

1. Elephant Man (EMI)
2. Devil Doll (Kingston)
3. Scanners (Guild)
4. Horror Hospital (Iver)
5. Witchfinder General (Hokushin)

PITS

1. Hawk the Slayer (Precision)
2. Dark Eyes (Iver)
3. Devil's Men (Magnetic)
4. Beast In The Cellar (Guild)
5. Naked Exorcism (Iver)

a concerted Government/Popular Press campaign that aims for the availability of only the most innocuous "U" certificate material on video.

AFTER THE SCYTHE . . .

Evidence of the new trend of videos cut from their cinema release is to be found in Paul Lynch's *Humongous* (Embassy) which is now a startlingly bloodless "Teenagers in Jeopardy" piece; there's a little more imagination evident than in Lynch's earlier *Prom Night* but you still won't be on the edge of your chair.

And, on the subject of video cuts, here's an impassioned plea to all admirers of the marvellous Dario Argento – rent or buy (if you can afford it) any copies currently in the shops of his masterpiece *Suspiria*. Thorn EMI Video have decided to call back all copies of the title to forestall legal difficulties, as the available print is an uncensored, non-B.B.F.C. copy, and the company's policy is to supply only certificated theatrical versions. So – time is running out for the complete print (but will even a cut print satisfy those who wish to ensure that only kiddie's films are available on video?)

Still with this subject, it's refreshing to be able to commend *Mother's Day* (VTC), George Kaufman's wittily black comic variation on *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (with the absent mother in Hooper's film replaced by a fearsome matriarch with a broken neck!) Here again, all the passages of violent action have been severely trimmed – and just as pointlessly as in the case of *The Evil Dead*, for the mood here is similarly tongue-in-cheek (even the "violence against women" angle is brilliantly dealt with by the beleaguered heroines finally fighting back with such unlikely weapons as drain cleaning fluid and a T.V. set!).

However, unlike less imaginative efforts that collapse like a deflated balloon when censorship cuts remove their *raison d'être*, Kaufman's movie still barrels along as both suspenseful shocker the Joe Orton – like comedy (there's a wickedly accurate dig at the "EST" character development sessions, with a flashily charismatic trainer abusing his pupils – one of whom is the psychopathic mother of the title). Other pleasing details – the outrage of one of the murderous brothers at being denigrated as a backwoods specimen ("We're very civilized here!"), a parody of the *Rocky* training session, and an E.C. comic-type surprise ending which is prepared for with all the ingenuity Al Feldstein and Bill Gaines displayed in *Tales From The Crypt*, etc.

So – cuts not withstanding – another entertaining addition to what is now a quartet of black comic/grisly terror tales – *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Motel Hell*, *Evil Dead* and, now – *Mother's Day* (N.B. – I shouldn't forget to mention the careful attention to building personalities for the three girls – highly unusual in the genre!)

A final note on the vexed issue of those who are deciding what is suitable for our consumption: ThornEMI (further to the above *Suspense* note) have removed for video four climaxes of *Halloween III* – I am grateful to reader Stephen F. Witkowski for pointing this out to me, as at the time of writing, I've not yet seen the video. Let's speculate on other variations – *Psycho* without the shower murder, for instance?

RUBBER NECKIN'

Whatever you've heard about *Eraserhead* (Palace Video) is true – David Lynch's grotesque, surrealist vision of a mad industrial landscape populated by bizarre characters is unlike any other film you've ever seen – and maybe a cinema (with the right "aware" audience) is the best place to see it. Certainly the unremitting black comedy (copious bleeding of the hideous chickens that the hero attempts to dine on at his girl friend's, the final monstrous "opening" of his mutant baby) will only be for those with a taste for exotic cult movies; and the slow pace will alienate others. But for those who can take it, Lynch's pre-*Elephant Man* effort is a true film experience.

AND SO IT SHOULD BE!

Some years ago, director Gary Sherman made the strange and disturbing *Death Line* (more pointedly *Raw Meat* in the U.S.). So it's a particular cause for regret that *Dead and Buried* (Thorn E.M.I.) has little of the earlier film's assurance. Probably, however, some blame may lie with Dan O'Bannon whose script, like his earlier *Alien*, is a cliché-ridden re-write of earlier films (In *Alien*, *It-The Terror from Beyond Space*, here *Invasion of the Body-Snatchers*). But, unlike Ridley Scott, Sherman only produces the occasional shiver. Make-up effects, however, are admirable – particularly a mortician's reconstruction of a dead girl's face. Another difficult-to-find film, however – usual reason.

If any interest is to be found in the standard teenagers-in-jeopardy opus these days, it's in the amount of invention deployed by director and scriptwriter in ringing the changes with graphic and novel demises for the (usually sorely under-developed) characters. Constantine Gochis' *The Redeemer* (Derann) holds no surprises, unfortunately – and censorship cuts further cripple any attention.

Why doesn't John Irvin's film of Peter Straub's *Ghost Story* (CIC) work on any level? It's as if the cumulative age of its quartet of elderly stars (Fred Astaire, John Houseman, Melvyn Douglas, Douglas Fairbanks) has bled away any vigour in acting, writing or direction. Even Dick Smith's make-up effects (the progressively putrefying corpse of a murdered girl) go for nothing under Irvin's pedestrian hand. When a director best known for his

horror work turns his talents to other genres, it's interesting to measure his success against his customary endeavours. And two recent videos demonstrate one qualified success and one failure – these are Mario Bava's *Hercules at the Centre of the Earth* (Skyline) and Lucio Fulci's *Rome 2033* (Medusa).

ITALIAN CANNON FODDER

Of the two, Bava's contribution to the Italian "Mythological Musclemen" series is closest to the director's usual field – here, Hercules' descent to a lurid Hades (very Bava-esque, all green-and-red filters) has stronger than usual fantasy elements, as well as two elements very firmly in Bava's best vein: Christopher Lee as a demonic villain with vampiric overtones, and a horde of grave-spawned zombies.

Reg Park, as the indestructible hero, has Steve Reeves' massive physique, and similarly limited acting ability but

none of Reeves' charisma – but he does well enough. And the film justifies its mention by Durnan in "Films And Feeling" – even if one is still keen to catch what is apparently the most striking and imaginative of the cycle, Cottafavi's *Hercules Conquers Atlantis* (not yet on video). But, to be frank, Bava's film is a video of its time, of interest to genre completists only.

Ditto Fulci's *Rome 2033*, a far cry from his grisly zombie epics. Yet another *Mad Max/Escape* from New York clone, it has none of the director's fingerprints, and little individual interest.

THE RETURN OF TARA

Sometimes, a quite irrelevant aspect of a film will draw the attention when all around is grinding on mechanically. As with Jonathan Stryker's *Curtains* (Videospace) – the interest here is in seeing how time has treated Linda Thorson, ex-60s *Avengers* girl. The answer? Well, time has treated her more kindly than director or script of this listless thriller, which wastes that

estimable villain John Vernon (*Point Blank*, etc) as a film director called Stryker. Will the real Jonathan Stryker ...

NEW AND FORTHCOMING

Some really interesting items on the way – pride of place, of course to ThornEMI's *Strange Invaders*, with *The Lift* from Warner Bros running a close second. Also from Warners, the Hitchcockian *Last Embrace*. Embassy has *Saturday the 14th*, while Palace has the haunting *Kuroneko*.

From MGM: *Brainstorm*, Guild: *Megaforce* and *Robbers of the Sacred Mountain*.

BRIEF NOTICES

capsule comments by starburst video reviewer barry forshaw

In the beautiful and poetic *Eyes Without a Face* (soon to be available on video) Georges Franju transformed a grisly tale of a demented surgeon's love for his daughter into something visually stunning; in *Massacre Mansion* (Vipco), however, Michael Pataki turns Franju's material into some very enervated stuff indeed; a tired Richard Basehart and Gloria Grahame star.

Enzo G. Castellari ripped off all but the plot of *Escape From New York* for his first *Bronx Warriors*; with *Bronx Warriors 2* (Entertainment in Video) he's amended that oversight. More of the same uninspiring fare – and it's curious how his hero continues to look slightly camp despite his muscularity.

Speaking of plagiarism, *The Humanoid* (RCA) is as worthy of the attention of George Lucas' lawyers as was *Battlestar Galactica* – but director Aldo Lado (who, Tony Crawley informs us, is the real identity of "George B. Lewis") lacks the key to unlock Star Wars-style magic, and even the reliable Ennio Morricone hasn't twigged that John Williams' 19th Century symphonic style is *de rigueur* for space opera!

As more and more "hole in the wall" video companies spring up, I suppose we'll get more and more deceptive covers like that for *The Steel Claw* (Cycle) – not a grisly horror film as you may surmise from the box, but an undistinguished and elderly George Montgomery war film!

There's one main reason to catch *The Hunger* (MGM – UA) – Dick Smith's customary astonishing make-up effects. Otherwise, Tony Scott's film is pretty, trendy and vacuous – Catherine Deneuve has little to do, Bowie appears for marquee value only. Effective final sequence, however. ■



Top: Make-up artist Dick Smith with a gruesome creation from *Ghost Story* (CIC). Above: Smith also worked on the make-up effects for *The Hunger* (MGM – UA). Tony Scott's stylish horror film starring Catherine Deneuve and David Bowie.

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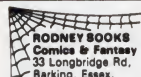
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All the major paperback companies in Britain publish their quota of science fiction, but the same can't be said of hardback companies, where a regular SF list is the exception rather than the rule. Despite the reputed boom in SF of recent years, hardback science fiction appears to have declined in numbers, with publishers such as Faber, Sidgwick & Jackson and Robert Hale having ended their SF lists. But there is still one hardback company which makes a point of publishing SF on a regular basis—Victor Gollancz, whose yellow-jacketed books with their SF shield on the spines are a familiar sight in any library.

Gollancz have had an SF list for over twenty years, and their latest catalogue shows it to be as vigorous as ever, with April being a month in which no less than four titles are published, all by British writers: there are new novels from Garry Kilworth (*A Theatre of Timesmiths*) and Ian Watson (*The Book of the River*), a collection of short stories by Richard Cowper (*The Titonian Factor*), and the first UK publication of the full-length version of Keith Roberts's *Pavane*, a classic of modern science fiction depicting a parallel world in which Elizabeth I was assassinated and the Catholic church maintained its hegemony over the state. Gollancz are currently the only British hardback publisher with a specific commitment to publishing SF in its more ambitious and literary forms, and recently I spoke to Malcolm Edwards, the SF editor there, about their list.

I began by asking him how many SF titles Gollancz plan to publish this year. The figure is eighteen, a notable increase on the ten or twelve titles of the past few years. What sort of sales does a typical title achieve? "On average we hope to sell about 2000 copies of each title, though short-story collections traditionally sell less than novels, and a given author tends gradually to increase his or her sales with successive books. 20% of these sales are usually to overseas markets; of the rest,

BOOK WORLD

by Chris Charles

perhaps 90% are sold either directly or indirectly to libraries, with relatively few copies going into private hands."

With sales of around 2000, Gollancz can usually break even on publishing a book. "For lots of hardback publishers 2000 copies is too low. They need to sell more like 3000 to make it work, often because they have full-colour covers, which add to the overall cost of production. Our money goes into the books themselves rather than overheads."

The distinctive jacket designs and colour scheme—criticized in some quarters—tie in with the importance of library sales. "We published Philip K. Dick's last novel, *The Transmigration of Timothy Archer*, as general fiction; it was well reviewed, but sold less than other of his titles which we did as SF. I think it's no coincidence that uniform jackets have enabled Gollancz to continue publishing SF whereas other companies have fallen by the wayside."

"The print-run for any given title is set in the hope that the book will sell out in two to three years, otherwise it's unprofitable. After this, most titles sell about 50 copies a year. Some titles, such as *The Drowned World* by J. G. Ballard, stay in print, but if books by a well-known author have been out of print for a few years, sometimes we reissue them. In recent years we haven't done much reissuing, but lately we thought we'd try again with Frank Herbert's *The Dragon in the Sea* and *Ringworld* by Larry Niven. We're also planning to reissue some Robert Hein-

lein and H. P. Lovecraft titles."

Was there any specific policy regarding the list? "Not really. We could like the list to have an overall quality, and we try to publish good books even if it's going to be difficult financially. But you have to balance these titles with commercial books which you know are going to do well."

Among the latter are such titles as *Valentine Pontifex*, the third book of Robert Silverberg's successful series about the planet Majipoor, and Frank Herbert's *The Heretics of Dune*, the fifth title in the "Dune" saga. These books get full-colour covers and major promotion.

"The current trend is hardback best-sellers. Really popular SF is taking off in terms which match any other stuff. Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke and Julian May have all been on the best-seller lists, and I would be surprised not to see *Heretics of Dune* doing just as well. We're expecting it to sell even better than the previous Dune novels."

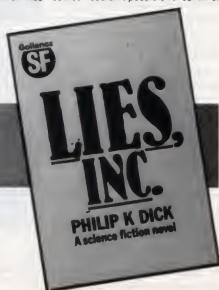
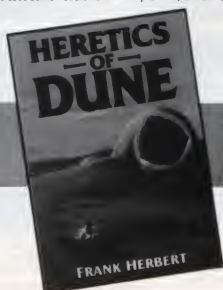
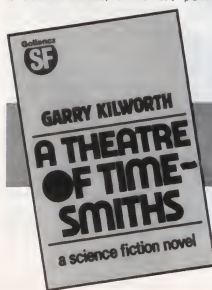
At the other end of the scale, Gollancz have also brought new writers into print for the first time. "We've no specific commitment to publishing first novels, but they are good to find. To uncover a new British writer is to make a good investment. Ian Watson and Philip Mann are two good examples. In business terms it's not such a terrible risk if the book is good because you can expect to sell it to overseas publishers." Last year's undoubted success was *Golden Witchbreed* by Mary Gentle, a first novel which was

well received by both critics and readers and which went on to sell to a U.S. publisher for a considerable sum. This year Gollancz are publishing a first novel by William Gibson, an American writer who is already a hot property in the States.

In fact, American writers tend to outnumber British ones on the Gollancz list by about two to one. Is this reasonable? "I think it reflects the balance of the material we receive." What about SF from other countries? "We tend to find that a lot of European SF doesn't come across well in English. There's also the practical difficulty of having to include translation fees—immediately costs are higher. We have published European SF in the past, but mostly it's only feasible if it can be subsidised by a link with a US publisher or a state publishing system."

I asked if there were any particular trends discernible in current SF. "It's pretty eclectic at the moment, and I wouldn't like to generalize on where it's going. But I do have a vague feeling that it seems to be better than it's been in recent years." Why, then, is it comparatively rare in hardback? "I think it's partly because with paperback companies editors have to be jacks-of-all-trades, whereas hardback editors tend to specialize more. So unless you have an editor who's specifically interested in SF, it's difficult to publish it on a regular basis."

Gollancz seem destined to continue as the premier hardcover science fiction publisher in this country, with new British writers rubbing shoulders with the likes of Asimov, Clarke and Heinlein on a list which probably reflects more than that of any other publisher the state of the art in the genre. But is the list safe in the hands of a man who has been known to frequent the same pubs as John Brosnan? Malcolm was quick to react to the implied slur on his character: he told me that the *Starburst* books page was better when John Bowles was writing it. Now it's an open secret that John Bowles was a pseudonym for someone else, but of course I couldn't possibly reveal who.



BEFORE launching into this month's selection of Q & A trivia, I've received a couple of interesting letters from smartypants readers correcting mistakes and expanding upon answers already given in this column. So, just so that it can never be said that I don't own up to my mistakes (which I don't, usually!), the Data Bank column presents...

INFO' UPDATE

Kevin Turney of Norwich, David Bonneywell of Strood and Mark Whitehead of Reading all wrote in to expand on the Tom Savini information given in *Starburst 68's* column. The general consensus of opinion seems to be that Tom Savini didn't actually work on *Night of the Living Dead*. By the time Savini submitted his makeup portfolio to Romero, shooting on *Night* was already under way. The effects on *Night* were the work of Regis Survinsky and Tony Pantanello. These two also did the effects for Romero's *The Crazies*. And on *Dawn of the Dead*, Savini was assisted in the effects department by Gary Zeller and Don Berry, who provided the explosive effects. (And an aside to David B., I've never heard of a film called *The 5th Second of Forever*. Sounds like a bluff to me, Dave.)

And still on the makeup front, Alan Hedcock of London wrote to tell me that he gets all his makeup supplies from Charles H. Fox Ltd, 22 Tavistock Street, London WC2E 7PY. Try sending them a stamped addressed envelope for a price list. (Don't girls use makeup any more?)

AVUNCULAR LEO G.

Peter Winfield of Essex writes and asks what can I tell him about Leo G. Carrol who played Alexander Waverly in the *Men From UNCLE* series and films.

Carrol was a popular character actor in several films from the early 30s. He was born in 1892 in Weedon of Irish parents. His career got off to a start in 1911 in the theatre in London and after his Broadway debut in 1912 he became a popular stage actor on both sides of the Pond. His movie debut was in the 1934 production of *Sadie McKee*. Leo appeared in six films for Alfred Hitchcock - *Rebecca* (1940), *Suspicion* (1941), *Spellbound* (1945), *The Paradine Case* (1947), *Strangers on a Train* (1951) and *North By Northwest* (1959). Although very much a one performance actor, Carrol's deep resonant voice and striking physical appearance (including the bushiest eyebrows in the movies) allowed him to play a variety of types. In 1955 he submitted to Bud Westmore's make-up magic to play the poisoned scientist in Jack Arnold's *Tarantula*. Carrol also appeared over the years in TV, most notable in the 50s in the *Topper* series, playing Cosmo Topper,

Starburst DATA BANK

Information from the filing cabinet of Dr Sally Gary



Top: A gruesome scene from Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*, with make-up effects by Tom Savini. Above: A Universal publicity picture featuring both Boris Karloff and Lon Chaney Jr before and after master make-up artist Jack Pierce transformed them into *Frankenstein's monster* and *the Wolfman* respectively.

a man harassed and often helped by a couple of ghosts and based on the popular film series of the 30s and 40s. But it is probably as head of *UNCLE* operations in New York that Leo is best remembered today. Leo G. Carrol died in 1972.

CAT CALL

Jason Webster of Luton wants to know (rather rudely) why *Starburst* hasn't covered the career of Val Lewton.

Well Jason, we haven't covered the careers of lots of people. We'll get there and what's more we'll send you a free copy of the issue when we do - with the relevant pages torn out!

MONSTER MAKER

Wallace Wordsworth of Kensington wants a complete list of make-up artist Jack Pierce's credits.

Sorry, Wally, but a complete list is out of the question. Not because I'm lazy but simply because it's near impossible. Pierce was born in New York in 1889. He started out acting on the stage. Like so many others he went West to Hollywood where he found work in the movies as a character actor, stuntman, assistant director and cameraman. Just how he became involved in the world of make-up remains a bit of a mystery. Although he wasn't named as head of Universal's make-up department until 1936, Pierce worked on all the major fantasy films for the studio including *Frankenstein*, *The Invisible Man* (where he worked closely with special effects wiz John Fulton devising Claude Rains' non-appearances), *The Mummy*, *Bride of Frankie* etc. etc. A meticulous worker, Pierce spent a considerable amount of time researching his assignments. Perhaps his greatest achievement was 1932's *The Mummy*. Long before the days of latex appliances, Pierce spent up to five hours a day preparing Karloff (and that's how he was billed, by the way) for his role as the ancient revived priest. Using a combination of collodion (for drying and tightening the skin), muslin cloth and fuller's earth Pierce turned the Big K into the most believable monster mummy ever to stride across the screen. Too monstrous, in fact. A brief scene which showed Karloff actually walking out of his mummy case to grab the Scroll of Thoth from an hysterical David Manners was deleted before the film's release. For the rest of the feature Pierce created a less horrific Ardash Bey, but on no less disturbing, making Boris look like a desiccated coconut. In later years Pierce worked on Z-grade horrors like *The Devil's Hand* (1961) and the worst version ever of *Beauty and the Beast* (1962). He died in 1968.

WHOSE MUMMY?

Speaking of mummies, Rick Cooney

of Melbourne, Australia is suffering from that awful disease (or maybe he's just trying to catch me out) of remembering a snippet of plot but that's all. As Rick says, "I saw a movie on Aussie TV many years ago that was a sort of mummy film. There was a mummy-like monster killing off an archeological expedition. Unfortunately, the film was so censored that we barely got to see the killer. Any ideas?"

I've always got lots of ideas, Rick. It might be one of several, but I think the most likely is a little something called *Pharaoh's Curse*. Made in 1957 by an indie outfit named Bel Air, this cut-rate shocker was released through United Artists. Directed by Lee Sholem from a screenplay by Richard Landau and interestingly produced by Howard Koch, a Hollywood mogul who not only has the radio script to Orson Welles' *War of the Worlds* broadcast to his credit but also was the producer of *Casablanca* among scores of others. Just what he was doing involved in this drek is anybody's guess. Story-wise, *Pharaoh's Curse* has some interesting plot elements including vampirism. But it's dull, dull, dull. Music was by Les Baxter who scored most of the Roger Corman Poe adaptations, and the minimal special effects were by Jack Rabin and Louis DeWitt.

Mothra), *Godzilla Versus the Sea Monster* in which Godzilla, Mothra and Ebirah team up and, of course, Godzilla

even had a set to with King Kong. Godzilla has also run into other creatures such as The Smog Monster, The

Cosmic Monster, as well as turning up for a garden party on Monster Island.

As the years and the films went by Godzilla suffered something of a role reversal. The scaly one had become a real hero to junior Japanese and occasionally he'd find himself defending the human race against all kinds of alien assailants. The majority of the plots for these monster rallies are silly; and when I say silly, I mean it. But the Japanese, a logical and disciplined race by nature, haven't extended that to these admittedly juvenile monster extravaganzas. But whatever the shortcomings of the Godzilla and associated Japanese monster flicks, they are great fun with virtually non-stop action and sometimes spectacular effects.

But that's just *Godzilla*. What about all the other Japanese horror and SF films, I hear you chorus? To cover all aspects of the subject would take up several books and it seems a pity that no single volume covers this fascinating area. The vast majority of books on Japanese cinema give the subject short shrift as well, despite the fact that such films make up a lot of the local product and box office admissions. Worth looking out for is *The Japanese Fantasy Film Journal*, a well-produced annual fanzine which features much in the way of retrospectives, special effects articles and interviews along with various checklists and, very importantly, title changes. You can find it in all the usual specialist shops.

So, finally, Bill, to answer your question, we don't have an excuse, but if it's any consolation, Richard Holliss is busy, slaving over a hot typewriter, to bring you a mammoth feature on Japanese fantasy for an issue of *Starburst* later this year.

GODZILLA!

Bill Wright of Newcastle asks why we don't cover more Japanese monster movies in *Starburst*.

A fair (and prize winning) question, Bill. Japanese monster movies really kicked off with *Godzilla King of the Monsters* in 1954. This Toho production, directed (in black and white) by Inoshiro Honda was in part a response to the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the Americans in 1945. Just as U.S. cinema mirrored the cold war of the 50s through its SF films, so Japan tried to exorcise its horrors with movies that portrayed mass destruction by (often) atomically mutated monsters. *Godzilla* was picked up for U.S. distribution in 1956 but the local distributors felt it needed something. They deleted several scenes and shot new footage of Raymond Burr as a U.S. newsman covering the story. The changes made *Godzilla* a different sort of movie altogether. Where the original had a strange air of melancholy about it, the cutting of the Japanese scenes and the addition of Bulky Burr turned it very much into a formula monster pic. But it was a big hit, both in Japan and in the west and spawned many more films featuring Godzilla, his son and other assorted friends and relatives. There's been *Gigantis The Fire Monster* (which was actually the first sequel known in Japan as *Godzilla's Counterattack* or *Return of Godzilla*), *Godzilla Versus the Thing* (in which he did battle with another Toho classic monster named



Top: Universal make-up man Jack Pierce turns Bela Lugosi into Ygor the hunchback for Son of Frankenstein (1939). Middle: Godzilla gets to grips with a mucky menace in *Godzilla vs the Smog Monster*. Above: A portrait of the fire-breathing Godzilla from his guest appearance in *Ebirah - Terror of the Deep*.

PICTURE REQUEST

Finally, at the end of a long series of questions about H. P. Lovecraft films that were never made — and as far as I know, never will be — Guy Cowlishaw of Bognor Regis (I knew somebody lived there!) has requested a picture of this columnist. Why, I can't imagine, but because I have a sense of fun, I've allowed *Starburst* to use one of my pictures to illustrate their next issue and which appears on the back page of *Starburst* this month. Modesty prevents me mentioning that there are more where that came from if any one's interested!

In the meantime, till next month, keep those questions coming in.

Send all your questions on fantasy tv and cinema to *Starburst* Data Bank, *Starburst* Magazine, Marvel Comics Ltd, 23 Redan Place, London W2 4SA United Kingdom.

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